

# THE CONVALESCENTS

CHARLES F.  
NIRDLINGER





Class PZ3

Book No 26

Copyright N<sup>o</sup> Co.

copy 2

**COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.**

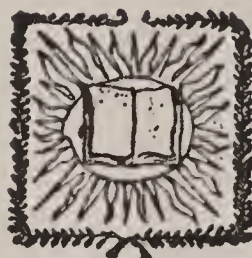




# THE CONVALESCENTS

BY

CHARLES FREDERIC NIRDLINGER



*New York and London*  
THE CENTURY CO.

1923

*Copy 2*

AKG  
New  
Co  
copy 2

Copyright, 1923, by  
THE CENTURY CO.



#1.75

Printed in U. S. A.

*g*

FEB 27 '23

©CIA696549

To  
H. M. N.





## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I A MUSICAL CLINIC AT DOCTOR HAMPDEN'S . . . . .	9
II THE CITY OF DESPERATE CHANCES . . . . .	22
III OVER THE 'PHONE . . . . .	37
IV A DANCE IN THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS . . . . .	43
V THE SPHINX SHOWS HER COLORS—AND HER EARS . . . . .	54
VI THE ELOQUENT RETICENCE OF TWO IVORY STICKS . . . . .	69
VII A LESSON IN SICK-ROOM DEPARTMENT . . . . .	76
VIII THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T WAIT ON BROADWAY . . . . .	90
IX THE PSYCHOSIS OF DOUGHNUTS AT MIDNIGHT . . . . .	101
X THE CODE OF THE PORCH CLUB . . . . .	109
XI THE FACETIATION OF A MAJOR OPERATION . . . . .	125
XII THE WAY OF A MAID WITH A FAHRENHEIT . . . . .	134
XIII THE BLUE-GINGHAM TRAGEDY . . . . .	146
XIV THE MAGNIFICENT MADNESS OF CAPTAIN JIM . . . . .	153

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV	THE CASE OF THE TWO LILLY'S—AND SOME OTHERS . . . . .	162
XVI	A CLINIC OF MODES, MANNERS AND MOTIVES . . . . .	174
XVII	A DINNER OF CONSEQUENCE . . . . .	181
XVIII	ON BREAD-PUDDING AND FREE EXPRES- SION . . . . .	190
XIX	THE UNSUSPECTED POTENCY OF MRS. HUGGINS' UKULELE . . . . .	201
XX	THE SWAN-SONG OF "BIG KELLY": AC- COMPANIST, DOCTOR HARLEY . . . . .	218
XXI	SPRING IN TINICUM MEWS . . . . .	231
XXII	THE IMPS OF MISCHANCE TAKE A HOLIDAY . . . . .	241
XXIII	THE GREAT STRIKE . . . . .	248
XXIV	A PHRASE THAT LOST A PULPIT AND WON A WING . . . . .	258
XXV	FOUR THOUSAND MILES BY TAXI . . . . .	268
XXVI	THE END OF THE WORLD . . . . .	279
XXVII	"WHEN GALLIARD-TIME AND MEASURE- TIME—" . . . . .	296
XXVIII	DOCTOR HAMPDEN PUTS THE PERSONAL NOTE IN A PROFESSIONAL RECORD . . . . .	305

# THE CONVALESCENTS

## CHAPTER I

### A MUSICAL CLINIC AT DOCTOR HAMPDEN'S

A BOY walked into the waiting-room: a serious-looking boy who moved sedately, acknowledged almost sombrely the secretary's address by his first name. Under one arm, and over one shoulder, he carried strapped bundles of school-books which he dropped silently in a corner, behind a chair. Then, with the slow deliberation of an aged man, he rubbed the wintry mist from his huge tortoise-shell goggles, nodded soberly to some of the patients and drawled into the hall. Through the open door, Cartell saw him dash up the stairs, two at a time.

The next moment, a piano started, softly, exquisitely, Dinorah's Shadow-Dance. Half-through, it swerved to a waltz—Andreef's Gatshine. A dozen bars of that, and brazenly, without warning, the piano went after "Minnie"—antic, marantic yet perennial "Minnie." Drums—snare and base—summoned the posse. Chimes, bones, banjo, tam-

bourine and castanets took up the chase. Xylophone, trombone, whistles, cat-calls, saxophone, swelled the hue-and-cry. Up and down the keyboard "Minnie" raced, the savage band at her heels; burst through the door—pervaded the house, tip-toe or hulla-balloo,—clamored to the roof—tumbled down the stairs—into the waiting-room and out again, back to the key-board—in a quivery, shivery frenzy of rhythm. The ceiling creaked and trembled the tempo. The crystal chandelier bobbed and jingled the riotous dance. Even that the patients seemed not to notice; sat silent, motionless, expressionless; graced in fearsome thoughts—or, possibly, spell-bound by surprise.

Cartell looked expectantly for some command of silence to the room above. But, no, the band played on; confident, ecstatic, frenetic, fortissimo. Doubtless, he thought, the consulting-room is sound-proof. Or else the doctor's power of concentration would defy a boiler-factory.

He wondered if there might be method in the madness of the music; if it were planned, or at least sanctioned, to distract the anxious company from their gloom and fears. He had heard much of Doctor Hampden's catholic mind and methods, the psychic quality of his understanding, the mystic solace of his personality. "Minnie" probably meant more than met the ear.

And gradually the waiting patients gave color to the notion.

The secretary, absorbed in her work, appeared utterly oblivious of the rollicking, raffish tumult. But, presently, the type-keys were clicking in rhythm with the Jazz. An old man was swinging his stick, furtively, into a drum-major's staff. A tiny baby, whose mother had been demanding 'Still, Jan Ole, ban still!' at frequent intervals, changed its cries to contented crows: kicked up its heels and waved its hands and panted excitedly until its mother felt called on to explain: "Jan Ole ban crazy by Jazz." A grande-dame, of frigid mien, who for a while stared icily at her magazine, must have warmed to the music; for she emerged, partly, from her disdain and her kolinsky pelisse—and jiggled her mesh-bag in unison. Whereupon a girl in kitten-fur jacket and a hat that was largely exotic vegetables topped by a dissipated pom-pom, winked at no one in particular, and smiled at the universe—a kindly, sympathetic Saturday-to-Monday smile.

It certainly was a jolly party—for a doctor's office.

A door is heard to open, and the voice of a patient taking unwilling leave, with the wonted "Oh, Doctor, one little thing more I forgot to tell you"—evidently something not so very little, or else so very complicated that it took prolonged and animated susurrations for the telling which grew in candour and detail as it lagged toward the street-door, and

promised to continue beyond in confidences to passers-by on the side-walk.

Immediately the doctor's door re-closes, the Lady-of-the-Pelisse rises, with plain intention to enter; but Miss Frewen looks up from the type-writer, shakes her head "No," and nods to Jan Ole's mother. Madame glares, moves her lips, as though to say: 'Makes one sick!' or, possibly, only 'Bol-shevik!' But no matter: Swenska takes the *pas* from kolinsky.

The vegetable-patch turned to Cartell, after an uneasy survey of his evening-clothes showing beneath a top-coat: "Are you-all waiting for the doctor?"

"Yes, Miss."

"I wasn't sure"—her eyes still sweeping his evening clothes—"Thought maybe 'twas the party upstairs—and I'll miss my supper if I got to wait much longer."

The secretary re-assured her:

"Your turn next—and *then* yours, Madame," to the great lady.

There you have it—the ideal democracy—in the office of a great physician! Rich and poor—highest and lowest—palace and hovel—culture and ignorance—alien and native—the banker's lady, the huckster's baby—alley-cat and sables—meet as peers in a true republic. It is Thomas Jefferson's blessed idea in action; the finest caramel of communism: the soviet of science that Tolstoi dreamed and his

moujiks will realize in Time's own time: the essence of socialism as Christ conceived it.

The mantel-clock struck seven: then the quarter. Cartell decided to give up his errand—at least until tomorrow. . . . He'd be late at his dinner-engagement. . . . And Doctor Hampden wouldn't see him now, anyway; past his office-hours—of persic precision, report said and a wall-card hinted. . . . Besides, there was really no valid excuse for his coming here—no sense—bothering a famous physician—after office-hours—with imaginary ills. That's all they were,—nerves, fag, nicotine. He'd been assured of that by men of science and his own Science. . . . He'd never have thought of consulting Hampden, except that he happened to be coming over here—on much pleasanter business—and might just as well obtain his confirmation of Saxby and Craigie—and Williams: regularly his physician. The last, indeed, had suggested Hampden—"long as you're going over there anyway. And after that, keep away from doctors. Or, eventually, you'll convince one that you're really ill."

But now—the inquisition at hand—what was there to tell? That he was feeling splendid?

'No pain—ache—symptoms?'

Nothing!

'Depression?'

Contrary! Cheerful — buoyant — gay — thoroughly enjoying the band-concert, up-stairs.

'Then what the deuce you doing here—taking my time?'

Hampden, he'd heard, could be quite crusty on occasion. Yes, he'd make some excuse, to the secretary, and get out.—'Would she please say to the doctor'—just then hilarious "Minnie" expired, of rhapsodic syncope, in a dazzling explosion of musical impudence. In the sudden stillness, stunning by contrast, the place became horribly sombre, as though mourning the recent demise.

"Your turn next"—the secretary said. Cartell reacting to the gloom, construed the words ominously.

The room he entered was in darkness save for a hooded lamp above the desk. Its shaft of light fell upon a face lean, meagre, chiselled to cameo fineness. Instantly would recur to one the familiar print of the young Corsican—the petit-caporal of the 13th Vendemiaire. The figure, trim, spare, alert, spartan, comported with the juvenile mask. The seeming youth of the man who rose to greet Cartell cheered and heartened him. Here is one—he cajoled himself—whose decree need not be taken for final, despite his fame and authority. He's quite too young to have the last word—unless it's pleasant.

Doctor Hampden heard, with the customary professional patience, the customary saturnalia of symptoms. Save for the customary interjection of "H'm" or "Yes," or "I see," he suffered the customary introspection and psycho-analysis and glar-



ing misuse of medical phraseology, which the physician checked with a sudden:—

“Changed your collar lately?”

The question disconcerted, with hint of coal-dust from the train-journey, until the physician added: “Size, I mean.”

He recorded the answer. Then followed the questions of convention: ‘Name—age—occupation—weight’—and then——

“What else do you know about yourself?”

The patient offered some souvenirs of family history——

“No! Don’t want that. Treating you—not your grandmother.”

He scrawled on a note-pad, scarcely taking his eyes from the patient. He threw in an occasional word of prompting or comment; his speech laconic, terse, seeming disjointed, but in reality dropping only needless words. His sentences were the man himself: bone and sinew and muscle: nothing superfluous.

A buzz interrupted—to his obvious annoyance.

“Yes—at the ’phone.—Cold? Send him over. . . . Your country-place? No—road snow-bound—take hour to motor out there. . . . O, yes, in *my* car! . . . Sniffles? Any cough?—Chill?—Temperature? . . . Only lot of sniffing. . . . Has he been out today? . . . Skating! . . . No, not slightest danger—no cough, chill, temperature. . . . Nurse?—No, no, doesn’t need nurse—nothing—except his supper—and go to bed.—Silly thing—tele-

phone! Ethics all wrong!—Here I am trying to get history of the case and woman 'phones—from country—husband—just in from skating—sniffing. Wants me come out—twenty miles—and bring trained-nurse—for a case of sniffles! Doesn't occur to her that all he needs is handkerchiefs. . . . Still, she's very young and just married.—You married?" he asked, resuming the record.

"No."

"Ought to."

"Going to—this Spring."

"Right! World has no use for bachelors, since the war. They should be made to live alone."

"They're supposed to, doctor."

"Yes, but I mean exiled—by themselves—on an island. So the breed will die out.—You wired me, I believe, from New York?"

"Yes, and you may care to know, perhaps, that in New York, before coming over here, I saw Dr. Saxby and Dr. Craigie. You know them?"

"By reputation, of course. Not your—usual—advisers?"

"No. Williams—T. C."

"Had him long?"

"Many years."

"H'm, h'm," musingly. "What's he say?"

"Said I should see you—so long as this chance offered."

"H'm, h'm."

"But Saxby and Craigie," he hurried on, "they

said I was perfectly all right; nothing to worry about."

"Probably isn't, if they said so. Great men, both. None better. Suppose you take your coat off and waistcoat."

"Won't some other time do as well?"

"Not for me," Hampden retorted. "My hours are pretty well filled up. As for you, I can't say till I've looked you over."

"It's only that I've a dinner-engagement at seven-thirty," Cartell explained.

"So have I. We can both make it, if we don't waste time." And opening the door to the next room he placed a screen before it and called:

"Miss Frewen—notes, please."

He spoke rapidly, with evident certainty, scarcely raising his voice. But to Cartell, comprehending, it thundered like the crack of doom.

"The jig is up, isn't it?" he asked, forcing a smile.

"No, I wouldn't say that. I can show you my record of a case almost identical"—and he took from a cabinet a type-written folio and read it aloud; stressing some details, repeating some phrases, blazoning the triumphant climax.

Cartell didn't hear a word of it.

He was trying to recall, eagerly, just what those others had told him—Saxby and Craigie—their tone and manner and look; and all the while, from above, came, absurdly, the strains of "Good-bye, Boys, I'm

Through," the orchestra re-enforced now by an ocarina.

"What did they mean—Saxby and Craigie," he challenged, "when they told me I was all right?"

"Both good men," Hampden repeated; "no better anywhere."

"But you think they're wrong, this time?"

Hampden didn't answer directly. "Just as I may be wrong," he evaded; "I hope so. And I'm going to take you on Wednesday to Dr. Fenway. If he agrees with me, and advises that you take the chance——"

"One in a hundred!" Cartell knew enough for that, and the physician objected only:

"Fenway has won against greater odds—and worse going. 'Cause you're in good shape, generally."

"How long can I hold out, this way?"

"Some months."

"How many—six or eight?"

The physician hesitated a moment before he answered:

"No—two or three."

"That will have to do—to straighten out my affairs," and he put on his coat and started for the door.

Hampden retained him.

"Now, I'm not going to let you go out of here in that mood. You'd spoil your host's dinner-party.

Sit down a moment. What'll you have? Cigarette—cigar—or stogie?"

"No matter."

"I see—like me; anything that burns and makes smoke."

His talk was not of Cartell nor of himself, but only of his colleague, Fenway: his supreme skill, his magic-like achievements, his tireless devotion to a case once he undertook it, and, best of all, his inherent gentleness and sympathy. "If it were anyone else than Fenway," he concluded, "I might not urge you, perhaps, to take the chance."

Cartell shook his head, still unconvinced.

"Of course," Hampden said, "we're only human—all of us—except, possibly, Fenway. Sometimes I think he's a little more than human.—Wednesday, then at three o'clock, you be here"—and he noted it on his date-calendar. "Meanwhile I'll get hold of Dr. Fenway and see if he will——"

"Thank you, but—I've quite decided"—he meant to refuse the appointment, but Hampden's hearty hand-clasp somehow re-assured him.

"I'll think it over," he said.

"Fine," Hampden laughed—"I'll expect you."

He came away with the jolly dance-time ringing in his ears. The apparent confidence of the physician, the eager sympathy of the man, were still upon him. The air of a nipping, winter night braced him. He took courage, somehow, or promise, from a sky

blazing with stars and a full moon, hanging low, in an orange lantern. Occasionally a sleigh sped through the snow-covered street, the bells tinkling as if in laughter. Motor-cars streamed past, and once or twice he glimpsed a furred figure cuddling a bit closer than was really necessary in so spacious a seat.

Damn it, no—it couldn't be! This was too nice a world to leave forever—in two months, or even three!

And even so—what of it? he asked himself, with nothing of bravado or indifference. Come what may, it would all be over with. There'd be an end, one way or the other, of the dull torture he'd endured for months, the overwhelming weariness, the appalling haunt, through inert days and sleepless nights, that he was done for: his will to go on, in the work he loved best, utterly helpless against a fever slow, subtle, ceaseless.

Something to be rid of that, you bet! he told himself, and took cheer from the conviction.

And he was startled, amused, exhilarated to find how lightly the blow had fallen. Nothing like what one imagines—and dreads. So utterly different, indeed, so little terrifying, that it argued error in the physician's wisdom. It must be so,—a mistake!—else the mind would react to the sickening shock. And it did nothing of the sort!

Hang it, no! It couldn't be as Hampden said. 'One chance in a hundred'—ridiculous!—for a man

who could swing along at a five-mile pace—humming the Jazz-tune—and enjoying a stogie!—Hampden was just as likely to be wrong as Saxby and Craigie. —They don't know everything—the best of them! —They're only human—as Hampden admitted. Make mistakes—plenty. Everyone says that—

Then, like a sudden blow, Hampden's fame recurred to him: the tradition, or legend, that he never went wrong. And for a second the thought stunned him: held him stock-still, on the street-corner, heedless of the throngs of wayfarers pushing by. . . . And what if Fenway should agree with Hampden—'one chance in a hundred' or 'three months' at most—well, he'd fool them! Fenway could be wrong, too.

In that mood of self-cheer—'whistling in the dark'?—he denied it!—he crossed into Park Lane and rang the bell at Mrs. Moncrieff's.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CITY OF DESPERATE CHANCES

MRS. MONCRIEFF wrote animal-books: for children. Wrote them vividly and sapiently. Illustrated them, too, with the uttermost precision of color and line and posture. So that you couldn't but think she had observed and studied the beasts at first hand in their native forests, swamps and jungles. But she would promptly deny any such charge of mannish adventure. She had never gone farther in quest of the wild-life than the menagerie-tent of a traveling circus. Mostly and preferably she drew her animals from her imagination and an old Webster's Dictionary. On one occasion she pooh-poohed her publisher's suggestion that she frequent the comprehensive menageries in Bronx Park; she said the animals there weren't the real thing; that they'd lost their natural expression of kindness and their amiable manners by their close association with human beings.

Her occupation and absorbing interest in animals informed all her views and thoughts and judgments of human actions. Every man and woman she knew seemed to suggest some one of the animals she wrote



about. This peculiarity pervaded her speech—stuck out everywhere—like a porcupine's quills,—*Erethizon-dorsatus* she would have phrased it to preclude confusion. All her metaphors, similes and even her moralities were derived from the animal kingdom. Most writers consort secretly with Worcester, Bartlett, Murray, Roget, Funk and Wagnalls. Mrs. Moncrieff carried on, openly, with Hagenbeck's, Barnum-and-Bailey, Ringling Brothers.

And it was her habit to clinch matters by adding the scientific names. These she frequently confused with floral designations—because of her occasional excursions into stories of flowers. Thus, when speaking of lions, she would add, airily, *Taraxacum dens-leonis*, linking, in her mind, the king-of-beasts and the dandelion. The ramping tiger of Bengal-ese jungles she'd tame to *Lillium tigrinum*, as though it were a garden pet. One can imagine the saturnine smile of a crocodile at hearing himself called *Crocus sativus*. And the perplexity of a placid moo-cow addressed by the Latin for milk-weed.

These quite natural slips generally passed unnoticed, even by the learned men at the hospital where she figured in the Board of Directors, and where too, perhaps, she had first imbibed her love of strong language as essential to scientific clarity.

Now some urgent problems of the hospital's budget had hurried her return from Florida; a month's sojourn enlivened by the champs and curvets

of her niece Margot Allyn, and enriched by some studies of wild-life. When stale of schemes for animal stories Mrs. Moncrieff customarily resorted to Palm Beach, French Lick, Saratoga or wherever the season was in warmest rage. There she counted to find—and did, too—scenes and episodes that twisted, by some kink of suggestion, to her literary purposes. . . . One of her best known horse-stories, “The Rebellious Filly,” listed in the Zoology-course of some girls’-schools, was suggested by the elopement of the season’s dove-belle at White Sulphur with the head-caddie.

With out-dated courtesy Cartell’s hostess advanced to greet him at the drawing-room door; then excused herself for a moment, to take a ’phone message. Entering, he found Miss Allyn so intent upon the glowing fire-place and its attendant confidences that he was driven to a H’m to make known his presence.

She hailed him sweetly with the accepted salutation: “Oh, look who’s here!”; nodded slightly, extended her finger-tips with the extravagant *dégagé* of accepted form, and eagerly presented her companion: “Mr. Jerome.”

“I’ve met you before—frequently,” he perplexed Cartell: “Every day for the past month—several times a day”—and he grinned accusingly at Miss Allyn.

Margot demurred with ready confusion, denounc-

ing Mr. Jerome as 'an awful joshier,' but quoting his oft-repeated reproof: "Only way he could get me off the subject was to get me out of breath on the dance-floor or get my mouth full of water in the breakers."

This flattering candor hardly stilled Cartell's guilt of intrusion in a tête-à-tête; nor dimmed a fretting flash of golden days and silver nights at Palm Beach. . . . He marvelled, half amused, that so slight a thing could loom so huge against the vision evoked at Dr. Hampden's. . . . The earth was falling from under his feet, and yet, in all the chaos that overwhelmed him, his thoughts compassed but one infinitesimal mote of the universe. Amid the crash of his worlds, the wreckage of friendships, strivings, hopes, ambitions, the balanced dread and solace of oblivion, he discerned only—a girl with bobbed hair; a face of charm unconquerable, yet hard-put to hold its own against the savage crafts of fashion. . . . To him, at this moment Margot Allyn signed and summed the impending dissolution. Must—trifles taunted—have divined it. In his panic fancy, she was leading it—with this fellow Jerome at her side. And that hurt—ridiculously: yet poignantly, mortally, confirming Hampden's words. He tried-back to the boast with which he'd heard them only minutes since; but now, in the glamour of her presence, the phrase wouldn't form.

Nor any other. He sat mute and stupid, inert

even to Margot's fizzle chatter 'till she turned suddenly to Jerome, whispering aloud and proudly:

"Isn't he hectic? I told you he was clever! Did I exaggerate?—Doesn't he talk well?—And, you know, he can keep going like that—how long, Tom?"

"Two months," he replied, "possibly three." They took his startled tone for attempted humor.

Mrs. Moncrieff, glancing at the clock, remarked: "Looks as though there'd be two empty nose-bags at table. We'll wait a bit longer."

Miss Allyn did hope that wouldn't make them late for theatre; so annoying to miss the start of a play; made it quite impossible for her—absolutely impossible—ever to get the hang of the thing.—"Especially if it's one of those crazy affairs that starts with the finish. So many of them do, lately—positively."

Jerome comforted her: "Doesn't begin tonight till quarter of nine, the papers say. That, of course, means quarter after. They're waiting for the scenery; it wasn't dry enough to travel with the company."

"Then it's a first production?"

"And the last, likely—ten-to-one shot! We see a lot of plays, here, that no one else ever sees. They come-out, try-out, peter-out, blow-out—all here—sometimes before the week's out."

"How perfectly shocking!"

"Not when you're looking for it. And we're

rarely disappointed in a *première*. Never in the trappings. There'll be flowers galore tonight—after the second act; bouquets, wreaths, set-pieces—for stars, managers, figurantes, authors—sent over from New York—by the regular theatrical florist; with large cards reading, 'Best Wishes,' 'Congratulations,' 'Broadway is Waiting for You'—all written in vanishing ink. So by the end of the week those same sophisticated cards can change, automatically, to 'Better Luck next Time,' 'Condolences,' and 'Broadway Still Waiting.' ”

“What a perfectly darling idea! But not *really*?”

“Yes! Only last week I saw the card of a Fifth Avenue florist—he himself was backing the 'star'—whereon the first-night inscription of 'Hail the Chief!' had vanished by the third night into 'Hey, Rube!' ”

Miss Allyn thought it all terribly funny and simply outrageous! “Why do they pick on this poor, dear town for their try-ons?”

Jerome never could quite make it out, he admitted. Unless, possibly, the place was famous for its hospitals, surgeons, doctors, oil-stocks, soft-drinks and race-tracks, and the people were inclined, by nature and custom, to take a long chance.

“The theatre tonight will probably be crowded. And they'll stick it out, like game sports, to the last breath or, at least, the last trolley-car. But, please,” he begged, “don't let me prejudice you at the go-off.”

“Oh, but you have!” she gurgled. “I know now I’m going to have a perfectly *marvelous* evening!” And beamed on him, so frankly flirtatious, that Mrs. Moncrieff tried to turn it off:

“Yes, my dear, you’d rather see a new play than a purple-striped okapi;—*Ocapia-johnstoni*”—she specified musingly—“habitat Semliki-Uganda.”

“I wouldn’t go so far as all that,” the young woman demurred. “I do like a *good* play. I certainly *do!* But I do *not* like a bad play; positively *not!*” Alarmed, apparently, by the silence that followed her daring sentiment, she added: “Anyway, that’s the way *I* feel about the drama! Don’t you, Mr. Jerome?”

A maid, at the door, broke off his answer. She ushered in Doctor Hampden.

There was no allusion to his tardiness save, indirectly, when the hostess presented Cartell.

“I began to fear Doctor Hampden couldn’t get here—and I so wanted him to know Margot’s fiancé.”

The merest shadow of a sign passed between the two men, and they said ‘How d’ you do?’ quite as though on first acquaintance.

The talk at table passed quickly over the Floridan sojourn to the subject uppermost in Mrs. Moncrieff’s mind and Dr. Hampden’s: the purpose of her hastened return to town. The theme in general is strange here to no company nor occasion; expected

and welcomed; its presence calling for no excuse nor by-your-leave. With one other it spans the conversational gaps twixt Shakespeare and the musical glasses.

The compelling interests of the community are confessedly limited: almost elemental. Two factors make up the social life: the hunting-set and the hospital-set. And they react, one to the other, in perfect mutuality; blend as naturally as Mocha and Java or brandy and soda. A far stretch of fancy might see the bond of identic occupation: the quest of foxy mischief-doers and their beneficent conquest. From each factor, too, has come a fame world-wide, of antithetic sorts. Foreigners, of quality to judge, discover in the fashion of the region a charm and distinction to marvel at by contrast. To Science the place is lesson and inspiration. To those upon whom Fenway, Hampden and their colleagues have wrought their miracles it is a shrine toward which they turn, humble and devout, with each new going-up of the sun.

The hostess explained the vacant place at table. "I expected one of your girls, Doctor, from B. M. H. —but she just 'phoned she'd been put on an emergency case, at the last moment."

"Yes, that's usual at present," Hampden said: "nurses are scarce; can't spare them for dinner-parties."

"I particularly wanted her here tonight, so you

might come to know her," she confessed, "and help her along at the hospital, if you will."

"Of course. Who is she?"

"Miss Savile—this year's class. Sandra Savile."

Hampden didn't recall the name. "Town girl?" he asked.

"No—Isle of Wight. Her people are old friends of mine—I promised to keep an eye on her. She's young—and remarkably pretty."

"Doesn't that identify her, Doctor Hampden?" Miss Allyn quizzed.

"Hardly," he laughed. "They're mostly all of that description—this year's class. Seems to be a comet-vintage of blue-gingham."

"How can they *possibly* go in for that messy work? I'll ask the world," but she looked to Mrs. Moncrieff for answer.

"Hanged if I know why they become nurses—some of 'em. Any more than I know why some animals become hard-working cart-horses when they might just as well be lazy, care-free kangaroos."

She named several present students at B. M. H. who had wilfully chosen the harder rôle, though all the conditions indicated the softer. But Sandra Savile was an instance especially in point. "A beauty: well-born: thorough-bred: of the old régime: rich enough, too—one of the few families of the other days that's managed to retrieve its bank-account and mint-bed. You know her people?" turning to Jerome.



“Yes, and some of them look upon Sandra as a plain ‘nut’!”

“Of course, she must be—‘plain nut’ or saint. They all are—except the few who take up the work because they really need the money.”

“They could do as well, or better, elsewhere,” Jerome was sure, “and have a much easier time of it—in shops or offices—or factories.”

“Not to be thought of! They’d rather starve—the poorest of them!—in decent company.”

“Isn’t that sentiment rather out-of-date?”

“I believe it is, in some sections of the country.”

Several times during dinner Cartell caught Margot’s eye fixed on him curiously, with questioning frown, even while she talked animatedly with Jerome.

Afterwards, alone with him for a moment in the drawing-room, she half-whispered with honest anxiety:

“What’s happened?”

“I’m wondering,” he laughed uneasily.

“Don’t be silly!—if you’re thinking of”—she nodded in the direction of Jerome. “I met him at Palm Beach—and Aunt Tony has always known him. Doesn’t like him, either. But he’s a pipsqueak at a dance. And you see what good fun he is! But what on earth have you been doing—since I last saw you.”

"Nothing much. Except think of you," he added stupidly.

"You want to stop it, man, if it does *that* to you." She drew in her cheeks and caved them still further with her finger-tips. Then turned to enjoy the caricature in the mirror.

"As bad as all that?" he asked.

"Well, you don't look good to me—I'll tell the world!" Then, to Jerome, as he drew near—"Advise this poor man, please, how you keep so *perfectly* fit."

Dr. Hampden took leave of the party at the carriage-door, preferring to walk the short distance to Dr. Fenway's house, and knowing that Mrs. Moncrieff's ancient team would need every possible minute to reach the theatre in season. Keeping up the horse-equipage was a severe strain on Mrs. Moncrieff's modest income, and she was repeatedly advised that a small car would be less costly; but:—"Somebody must preserve a specimen or two, so they don't become extinct, like their ancestral hippogriffs."

Mrs. Moncrieff was obviously pleased when Hampden told Cartell he hoped to see him again while in town: "You'll be here some days?"

Cartell wasn't quite sure: "But—until Wednesday, at least."

"Good! Drop in about three, if you can."

In the entr'-acte, following the mad scurry of

flowers down the aisles and across the foot-lights, quite as he had pictured, Jerome took Margot to promenade in the spacious foyer. Half of the audience had preceded them. It was a hieratic custom—that concourse in the foyer—remnant of the brilliant age when the French Opera came up from New Orleans, with the novelties of Paris, Milan and Vienna—and now kept a-bloom, faintly, by the regular recurrence of Monday night and a new play.

There was still, of course, an established opera-season, Mrs. Moncrieff told Cartell—"Not exactly a season—more of a spasm. Same exciting sort Philadelphia gets, and Newark. Odds and ends—mostly ends—of the Metropolitan Company bundled over here in the last day-train from New York, with their ward-robcs in wicker suit-cases, dinner in hat-boxes and colds in the head.

"*Aida*, with 'specially selected cast,' advertised months ahead. Day of performance, newspapers announce *Louise*—substituted at last moment, 'in response to overwhelming demand'—which wouldn't be so bad, only the curtain goes up on *Faust*, sung by understudies of *Tristan* with the scenery of *Salambo*. Turns out that *Aida*, originally scheduled here, was switched at the last moment to Philadelphia—or Newark—to take the place of *Carmen*."

"They send us plays—like this one tonight—still on the milk-bottle; but our opera comes on crutches."

She paused to exchange greeting, over the box-rail, with two or three men returning from the foyer.

Nodded to other familiars in the audience—some in small groups and, mostly, well down front.

“Must have been a rush of operations today! So many of them here tonight—the doctors and surgeons, I mean,” she added, and, Cartell evincing pronounced interest, she indicated several in the audience—some names of world-fame—to which she appended initials that sounded like degrees in science or literature but were really abbreviations of their respective hospitals. Presumably you knew that—the meaning of U. C. M.—D. K. S.—I. D. I.—M. G. H.

On each name, too, she pinned some tidbit of anatomy, as a decoration of prowess in that particular field: “Professor Beckwith”—for instance—“I. D. I.—stomatology.”—“Inchcape—gynaecology—and splendid dancer!” “Old Switcher—R. F. U.—cerebellum—sees every show in town.” Cartell had already observed him—because of his fearless resemblance to Ibsen and his roaring enjoyment of a peculiarly idiotic comedian who was pretending to be half-witted and who actually was. Presently the famous cerebrologist ceased laughing and was making notes on his cuff; he had happened on material for his next lecture.

Keen for distraction from anxieties peculiar to their calling, they turn straight to the theatre—“like a lot of college-boys after their mid-year’s,” Mrs. Moncrieff compared. “Good or bad, they don’t seem to mind—just so it’s a show. In fact, I believe

the worse it is the better they like it—same as with operations, it's much more relaxing. The managers must know that or they wouldn't send us such hopeless——” She smiled to some one in the third row: “That's Tantree—and young Fenway—son of the great man. They're from B. M. H.—that's Doctor Hampden's hospital.—And, by the way, you may feel quite set up over his asking you to call. He doesn't usually bother with well people.”

Cartell imagined that she pointed the “well,” inviting candor—quickly, while they were still alone. But to his questions regarding Hampden she answered nothing of such import—unless, possibly, by implication.

A celebrity even in the first teens of his boyhood. On the ball-field he pitched a curve that was a joy or despair, according to which side he played on. At school-party, even the kissing-games were slighted to coax and tease the bashful young wizard into amazing card-tricks, palming of rings and coins, feats of sleight-of-hand.

In blind-man's buff, his out-stretched hands went straight to the prize, as though the fingers saw.

Church-fairs and charity-bazaars counted on his talents more hopefully than on the oyster-stew or the pastor's address. On such beneficent occasions he might be persuaded to exhibit, as an especial attraction, his mystic powers of magnetism whereby a pass of the hand drew electric sparks from the giggling

subjects, and lifted chairs and tables from the floor without touching them.

He was one of the rare high-lights in the gayeties and excitements of the small town. The county weekly proclaimed the prodigy a future rival of Herrmann, Keller, Cinquevalli and, confusing leger-de-main with diplomacy, Machiavelli; predicted for the town's pride a notable public career on the stage or, at least, in big-time vaudeville.

Genius conscious, as always, of its intent and prowess, had a different vision.

CHAPTER III  
OVER THE 'PHONE

*Wednesday Evening*

FIRST VOICE

Hello, doctor!—That man I sent over this afternoon——?

SECOND VOICE

Yes. He was here.

FIRST VOICE

Good!—Thought he might back out.

SECOND VOICE

No. Here ahead of time.

FIRST VOICE

What do you think?

SECOND VOICE

Same as you.

FIRST VOICE

Sorry. Hoped I might be wrong.

SECOND VOICE

No. Not a chance.

FIRST VOICE

Mention what Saxby and Craigie told him?

SECOND VOICE (*with light laughter*)

Yes, yes.—What do you make of that?—Good men!

FIRST VOICE

Must have decided no use.

SECOND VOICE

Yes, of course. Saxby couldn't possibly miss: Craigie hardly. Case simple enough.

FIRST VOICE

Can you take it?

SECOND VOICE

Guess I'll have to—crowd it in somewhere. Says otherwise he'll let it go. Attractive case, too.

FIRST VOICE

Worth the chance?

SECOND VOICE

What do you think?

FIRST VOICE

Same as you.

SECOND VOICE (*decisively*)

Yes. Can't hurt. May help.

FIRST VOICE (*troubled*)

No room at B. M. H. at the moment, Dr. Kreweson says—unless he pushes some one out.



## SECOND VOICE

He will! Anyway, no particular hurry. Man said he'd want some time to put his affairs in shape. I gave him till Friday. We'll get him in somewhere.

FIRST VOICE (*rather hesitant*)

Don't know anything of his circumstances.

## SECOND VOICE

He volunteered that. Said he would pay in time if he lived and could pay at once if he died.

## FIRST VOICE

Satisfactory?

## SECOND VOICE

Perfectly.—Interesting case.—And, say, Hampden (*as if suddenly seeing a great light*), you know I really believe I can save that man with a little luck.

FIRST VOICE (*through burst of laughter*)

Ha—ha—ha! You believe that of every case you take! That's the one thing I envy you most—your sublime faith.—(*Abruptly serious.*) Say, have you seen that new play at the 'Grand'? . . . Dr. Switcher says not to miss it—worst thing of the year. . . . All right—I'll meet you there.

This the placid prelude to the journey out: The Great Adventure—so-called.

Hope names it so, and resignation. In the crystal of the metaphor one reads whatsoever faith orders, custom accepts, or fancy chooses. But the chronicle

stops at the title or, at most, a page or two beyond: a huddle of notes, impressions, regrets, apocrypha. . . .

For that anabasis there's been no Xenophon, no Stanley, no Amundsen; not even a good Crusoe nor Capt. Cook. Nothing better, when put to test, than some 'old Doc' Cook. . . .

Much was looked for from the sensitive Swinburne; and, more confidently, from the sensible William James—if not directly, then through the medium of his "white blackbird."<sup>1</sup> . . . The painter Whistler felt himself certain to come back, counting perhaps on his ability to quarrel with whatever company he might be thrown in. And the canvases alleged to have been done by Whistler's ghost in Peoria, Ill., through the medium of a local artist, were construed by some as the promised message; but Joseph Pennell, Whistler's disciple and biographer, decided at a glance that the pictures were not authentic. Mr. Pennell argues that they are not of Whistler's technique nor quality and that, even if they were, Whistler would not have painted them in Peoria. . . . What message might have eventually rung clear to Sir Oliver Lodge he jumbled in his thrifty hurry to open the box-office; the spirit-voice drowned in the show-man's ballyhoo. So the eager page is still blank.

Save for the start; sudden, always—as with this

<sup>1</sup>Professor James's pet-name for Mrs. Piper whom he declared his one honest subject.

man—hurried, dazed, panicky—panic that routs even fear. That the traveler notes with amaze and ecstasy: he is not afraid!—"Hope is the coward. Despair's a brave man"? Or mere vanity, perhaps?—an orderly, dignified exit. From the fuddle of his wits that thought flashes, absurdly; some "last words" of the great that hint rehearsal. From buried memory an instance leaps, crazily impertinent: The actor, given to servant-rôles and wife-beating, who all his stage-life had yearned for a chance at Kotzebue's resounding line, "The man who lays his hand on woman save in the way of kindness," and so forth. Fate denying, or professional intrigue, the player kept the speech pat for his final exit. But at the great moment habit gasped instead: "My lord, the carriage waits." Which wasn't so bad at that. . . .

From the throng about him—kinsmen, intimates and strangers—he hears sure promise of easy travel and safe return. But none keen to companion! That he senses poignantly, and, somehow, resents: he must travel alone. . . . Yet impatient to be off—away from the sombre portents of the parting: hand-clasps icy and tremulous with dread: tell-tale glances, tears that will not be denied, smiles that grief grotesques to grimace.—No, no, it isn't a gay send-off, whatever they may tell you of sweets further on. . . . But still—not afraid! That's the supreme surprise and revelation. . . .

You don't really know—you've read and heard

from experts. Pain has numbed your senses—and, at last, the needle—But for all they tell you, you know—and that you don't care! Just so it's done and over with. You're putting these people to a lot of bother. Keeping them from their engagements.—You catch a whisper of luncheon, matinee, tennis. . . . Why the deuce did all this have to happen? So unnecessary—ridiculous! . . . That nurse—the one who seems to sense it so—eyes you rather blamingly. . . . The only honest show of cheerfulness is from the surgeons and doctors, which the patient rather suspects for stage-business or professional politesse. . . . At this particular moment they are comparing modern civilization with that of Thebes and Luxor and, in the next breath, Virginia cigarettes with Cairene.—“Which do you prefer?” Dr. Hampden is asking the patient—who confides reply, in tones of thunder echoed a thousand-fold, to a huge, slow-descending candle-snuffer. . . . Nothing like what one has always imagined—from picture, poem, lore and conscience:—a languid, halting, groping stumble through a twilight vale of cypress, moss and willows. Instead, mad careering through space—a sea of azure ether—no question of the musky ether!—astride a giant rocket, making straight for the moon—no, that planet beyond—now that further on—and now one still beyond—way—way—way—beyond . . .

## CHAPTER IV

### A DANCE IN THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS

**T**HE idea of his being here was ridiculous. The whole thing was preposterous, from the start. Cartell tried to protest, but he couldn't make himself heard above the racket of the jazz-band. Or, else, they pretended not to hear. Cartell knew he wasn't so thick-headed or leaden-footed as all that! He didn't have to be prodded and thumped, pounded and hammered into the rhythm. It was a silly step, anyway; he had never cared to dance it, nor to see others. It wasn't a dance, really; more like a walking-ague, when done by amateurs. Under professional skill it became a syncopatic palsy. And they meant him to do it in that fashion, if they had to beat it into him and the life out of him.

He was a fool to come here, in the first place. He'd been warned of what they'd do to him and what sort of dance they'd lead him. He must have been—but, no, he hadn't drunk enough for that; only the fill of an ice-cream cone. And, besides, it was a peculiarly thin wine, light as Clos-de-Chaume, though of a very assertive bouquet—if you chose to call it that. There'd been an aperitif, too; but just

a few quick sips from a toy chalice, slim as a needle. . . . Yes, he might hold out and come through it, but—'one chance in a hundred!'—even with the help of the jazz-band. Still, this couldn't be their usual method. They must be playing a joke on him—fantastic, elaborate, horse-play joke.

That's why they brought him here for his lesson—in this spacious sweep of poppies and asphodel—with music to draw a crowd to enjoy his awkwardness. They doubtless had a movie-camera taking the scene and tonight he'd be shimmering on the screen for 11 cents including war-tax. . . . Well, he'd fool them: he'd provide a finish they hadn't counted on: he'd find the camera and smash it—and he started to cross the field. But he couldn't move, not one step. To that extremity of weariness he'd been beaten by that corps of dancing——

But wherever had he got that crazy notion? There was the jazz—he still heard that—but as for the rest—a trick of the eyes, in the hazy moon-light. He sought to rub them to clearer vision, and raised his hand only to have it beaten down by a sledge-blow. Those figures, ranged 'round Cartell, now were giants, Titan-tall; their bodies naked except for a breech-clout; their faces not cruel, simply grim, brutish, business-like. He'd seen them before, or the like of them: but where—where? O, yes, years and years ago, in the High-School History of Rome; these were Attila's gang-men. Or was it only lately, in the newspapers: the cartoonist's Hun, or the sym-

bol of Capital! No—he recalled now, perfectly—it was in Paris, just before the war, at a Quatz-Arts ball.—Just such a group of skin-clad cave-men who wielded stuffed clubs to clear strangers off the floor and made Sabines of their lady-friends.

Only, these giants drawing nearer, with horrid stride, bore actual sledges: man-high, wooden and iron-cored. And now each, in rhythmic turn, struck Cartell a mighty blow, on shoulders, back, neck, chest and arms and legs—everywhere except his head—wielding the sledge with the swing of a lumber-jack or the strong-man at the County Fair.

So that he shook and trembled in every part of his body; quivered, at each impact of the sledge, in every muscle, fiber, vein and atom. Yet he scarcely tottered: stood nearly upright. marvelled why they could not beat him down. Nor cause him pain nor hurt nor any feeling, except only a queer dull sense of shock, appalling, stunning even his will to cry out Pity! Mercy! Not for himself—he had ceased to care—but for that wan, white-haired figure, standing there in the moonlight, always with eyes fixed upon him, her hands folded in prayer, her saintly face drawn with infinite and impotent sorrow.

Then a hand, warm and soft, takes hold of his five finger-bones, and leads him softly, watchfully, as though he were a child or blind, to a bank of white clover. Sweet-smelling water touches his lips, cools his temples, refreshes his heavy eyes, so that they

open and he sees, at the side of the bed—the blue-  
gingham girl.

“Are you in pain, sir?”

“No, thank you.”

“And you’re quite comfortable?”

“Certainly. ’Tisn’t so bad at all—being dead.”

“Indeed you’re not, sir. Far from it, Doctor  
Fenway says. He’s quite pleased—and Doctor  
Hampden—and all of us.”

“Good work?”

“Yes, sir—most attractive! Now you’re to  
sleep.”

“Yes—sure hit. ‘Larry’ plays it well, too—up  
there. Great idea—doctor’s son—jazz-band!”

“Quiet, sir!”

“No, go on, Larry. Clever idea—keeps one  
from thinking.”

“You must sleep, sir.”

“Thank you—I’ve been asleep—months. Let’s  
see your card.”

“This is the chart.”

“Full-up?”

“Not yet, sir.”

“Thank you. May I have the—next—dance?”

“When you wake up.”

“But—I may—never——”

“Take this ice, sir.”

“Whatever you’re taking—thanks—and we’ll sit  
out the dance.—But save the last one—please.”



“If you’ll only sleep——”

“I’d like to. They’re starting ‘Minnie,’ poor, tired ‘Min——’ ”

The nurse made sure that he was quite asleep. Then she sat at the table and wrote, peeringly, in the twilight, the day’s record of the case, and made some notes for report to Miss Newlands, night-nurse.

These things she did with precision and detachment that were impeccably professional: quite as though Miss Beaux, the superintendent, were looking over her shoulder. Then, her chart written up, she did some things not at all professional. Stood over the patient with a gaze of affright and despair. . . . If Miss Beaux saw that!—Touched her eyes with a corner of her kerchief. Muttered, under her breath: “Rotten luck—poor devil!” And then, turning to leave the room, heard voices in the hall: paused discreetly at the door and blew her pert little nose, twice!

If the State Board of Licenses heard *that!* Blowing her nose—under such circumstances! And still in blue-gingham! In a graduate it might be a cold, if not a coryza; in a student-nurse—a month or two before her examinations—it was a challenge.

No, Myrtilla—you’re wrong! ’Tisn’t going to happen. Not that kind of a story. The web isn’t weaving—worse luck!—as you seem to imagine from that trivial indiscretion of a very young nurse.

Couldn't possibly be, for many reasons. You met one of them a while ago—hair bobbed—at Mrs. Moncrieff's.

'*That* girl?'

Why not? Piquante, amiable, sprightly.

'And slangy—every other word!'

No, Methuselah—not slang; merely the accepted phrases—for facile speech—of a type too impetuous to bother about individual expression.—You wouldn't have the girl pedantic, *précieuse*—'pie-face,' 'gooseberry,' in modish locution?—And she's certainly good to look at—a picture!

'Literally: henna — chinese-white — magenta — kohl!'

The accepted ornature of the type—Cotton Mather. The spiel-marks of yesterday are the hall-marks today. You wouldn't have her make herself conspicuous—like the show-girl who now boldly bares her cheeks of make-up and frankly hides her legs under skirts in order to pique interest, by strangeness? Nothing so bizarre for Margot Allyn!—Convention is the panache of the type, Rip—the most highly conventionalized type that society has evolved since your storied night-out in the Catskills. . . .

'Some say that Shaw did it—G. B.'

No more than P. T., the Shaw of showmen, "did" the mermaid, or the mummy of Thothmes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nothing of the Barnumiana enshrined in the Bridgeport Memorial so specifies the desiccated cæsar.—*Publisher's Note.*

'Others think the War is responsible—the Last War.'

No, Adam, the First War. And ever since she has been studied as Agassiz studied butterflies: pulled apart, analyzed, classified as Linnaeus did with flowers: painted as Audubon painted birds. Neurology, pathology, psychology have man-handled her without gloves. The gleanings of their observation and experience, literature catalogues in ruthless and unblushing detail. Through it all she comes unchanged in essentials.

Each generation has imagined her peculiar to itself: a product of the time and portentous. When the younger Dumas first put her on the stage, in the shape of *Balbine Leverdet*, he thought necessary to explain and justify his audacity in one of the most elaborate dossiers of dramatic literature. To read his preface of "L'Ami des Femmes," where he first caged her, one would think he had discovered a strange animal hitherto supposed to be extinct.

Fearful lest he be ridiculed as a nature-fakir the dramatist turned to biology; measured, bertilloned and vivisected the creature, assembling an array of anatomical and physiological details that one would hardly dare repeat unless writing a medical record or *A Novel of Feminine Psychology*.

Dumas shirked nothing, from head to toes—which he found "all of about the same length." . . . In the palm of her hand he traced a double line, or

even a triple, broken at several points, semi-circular, and, sometimes, enclosing or furrowing the monts of Saturn and of the Sun, "in which case—look out! . . . Ask her to dance—and she wants nothing better—and you will see that she is tireless, and you will feel against your arm, ribs at once supple and firm as blades of steel. She will not lean upon you—on the contrary she will carry you along, but her left hand will bite into your shoulder. At the end of the dance, her breath will be of extraordinary purity, of sweetness that recalls vaguely the savor of the true wine of Cyprus. . . . Plaudite sed cavete, cives! For she has no heart, no ideal, no soul. But she eats well"—(the most romantic novelist of this day harps on that)—"she digests well, she sleeps well; *elle ronfle*." Yet, despite all, Dumas exclaims, easy to love.

So Cartell found her—distractingly easy.

'And so, too, that other man, for whom, plainly, she's going to throw him over.'

No such intention—not for a moment!

'Then why the deuce all that flirtation?—Something else "accepted"?'

Demoded, O Postumus! Obsolete—"flirtation"!—That sort of thing went out with Waldteufel. The word itself went out with corsets.—The type is exquisitely sincere: la porte est ouverte ou fermée; she does or she doesn't. And her word once given—but even if it hadn't been——

Sandra Savile isn't going to marry—ever! She has always said so; and vowed it—to herself—when she put on her cap nearly three years ago. Nothing could ever persuade her to change her mind—unless possibly it promised continuance of her career in larger field. . . . Research-work—that's her dream. And Harley—the young surgeon who just left the room—that's his plan, too. Their common interest . . . and now Sandra put on this desperate case—and not by the long arm of coincidence, but by a broken ankle.

Still, your mistaken fancy had some basis. It has happened just so, in fiction and fact. Cupid's shaft and the surgeon's knife sometimes sharpen on the same whet-stone.

But this case didn't interest him. Rather hopeless, all around. In any event, no hurry job! A glance at the nurse shows him that. No chance here for his famous first-sight trick. That's a game for two. That limp shaving of a man they just brought in—no trouble to hit him and send the arrow clear through. But that girl they've put in charge of the case—with the air of a debutante Amazon but a cupid's-bow mouth—Why the deuce did they choose Miss Savile—prettiest in the place and least experienced!—she'd catch his arrow on the wing and use it for a hat-pin. She had two or three of them now. . . . Still, he'd hang around. You never can tell—in a hospital! Largely a matter of luck, anywhere. And he'd had fiddler's luck in this place.

Doctor Kreweson, the house physician, looking over the chart of Number Seventy-three remarked the fever.

"Much delirium?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Gruesome—morbid?"

"No, sir; light and rather—attractive. Imagines we-all have a jazz-band upstairs, with Doctor Hampden's little son, Larry, to lead it. I thought I'd best mention that, sir, as bearing on the psychosis of the case."

"So it does, in a way." But without knowing all the facts, Doctor Kreweson ventured a guess that the patient had called at Doctor Hampden's on some occasion out of office-hours and heard one of Larry's clinics of native American music, with illustrations by a full orchestra composed of and conducted by Larry himself and in person.

Kreweson further admonished the nurse that it was an unusual opportunity, coming on the eve of her examinations; she ought to learn a lot in the next few days.

"Oh!—Quick as all that?"

He 'hoped' so—ambiguously. They needed the room. They always did at B. M. H.

Doctor Hampden, later, confirmed his colleague's guess as to the dance-delusion. That the incident made, apparently, a lasting impression on the patient

need not be taken to indicate a condition of neurosis or hyperesthesia. He himself, though in normally good health, had frequently been similarly affected by some of his boy's musical researches.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SPHINX SHOWS HER COLORS AND HER EARS

SIX of them, the patient counted, as they filed into the room. They had, apparently, agreed on a verdict and came to pronounce it.

They marched in softly, but briskly, in step, with military formality: Doctor Fenway leading. Followed, Dr. Hampden. Then, in regular order, Kreweson, house-physician; Tantree, his assistant— young, boyish-looking—alarmingly so, considering; *his* assistant, the junior Fenway—even more alarming, by his youthfulness; Harley, dressing-surgeon— nearly as remote as the other two from Osler's curse on the hopeless forties.

They took posts about the bed promptly, precisely, strategically, as if by some long-established plan. Just as players might take their positions for the sure ascent of a climactic "scene." . . . So many things in a hospital suggest the stage; the arena of the clinics they name "theatre."

Simultaneously with their coming in, Miss Newlands, the night-nurse, went—no, she didn't; she *faded* out of the room—floated, evaporated—eva-



neced . She never simply came in or went out, so far as one could see or hear. She was either there, or she wasn't—which is about the last refinement of trained-nursing. Now, Miss Savile, the day-nurse—you knew when she came into the room—Zip! Bang! Three rousing cheers!—the instant she turned the door-knob.

. . . Still—you don't want a nurse *too* quiet. It's depressing, rather. Not fair, either, to compare her—in 'prentice blue—with the starched product in white duck.

The physicians fell at once to animated conference—wholly in pantomime! Doctor Fenway, of course, directed and dominated the mute conversation in which symptoms were discussed and treatments indicated by frowns, finger-touches, nods, uplifted eye-brows, smiles, faint or grim, by moving lips that uttered nothing audible, yet told everything.

Even with drowsy eyes, Cartell solved the hieroglyphics—labial, digital, manual; sensed the kindly intent of the silent physicians; their reluctance to say the word:—'Shot at sunrise,' or something to that effect. And, curiously, he didn't much mind. That's one of the neatest tricks of Nature—the indifference that keeps pace with her cruelties and finally out-runs them. So that now come what may——

"You have a good nurse in Miss Newlands," Dr. Fenway was saying.

"Seems to be," the patient assented faintly.

"One of our very best."

"Thank you," feebly.

"You're quite comfortable with her?"

"I suppose so—comfortable as I could be with anyone."

"Doesn't get on your nerves, in any way?"

"I haven't noticed. And I'm sure she does her best."

"Yes, of course!—But her personality—is that sympathetic to you, or not?"

"I guess so."

"Nothing you'd like us suggest to Miss Newlands?"

"N—No." . . . What's the use? he said to himself. She *does* read a newspaper with the rustle and crinkle and crackle of a devil-chaser on Fourth-o'-July—but every woman does that—except maybe Miss Savile——

"Speak out, if she isn't perfectly satisfactory," Dr. Hampden encouraged. "Sometimes a nurse may rasp a patient, and no one could tell why. If for any reason you don't like Miss Newlands, or for no reason at all, say so and we'll try to find another for you."

"No, no, please!" Cartell objected with sudden vigor. "Don't make a change! They're all pretty much the same, aren't they?—You couldn't find a better nurse than Miss Newlands. And I'm used to her now. I wouldn't have her go just because of an idiotic notion that, maybe, I don't like the way she

does her hair.—Besides, most of the time she's here I'm tight asleep, and when I wake up in the morning I find the day nurse on duty."

Dr. Kreweson named her to the others: "Miss Savile."

"How do you like her?" Dr. Hampden asked.

"She's a dear! Charming girl! Perfectly charming! Why, I never saw such——"

"Yes, yes, of course," Dr. Hampden interrupted; "but as a nurse, what do you think of her? Good nurse?"

"Too good! Wears herself out over a patient. Takes entirely too much interest in a case."

"She'll get over that!" Dr. Harley apologized to his colleagues. "She's very young, I believe."

"Terribly young—for such a trying patient as I am."

"We gave her the case," the house-physician explained, "only because we couldn't get hold of a graduate-nurse. We had secured one—Miss Dalkeith, last year's class—but the night before she broke her ankle."

"I don't mind," the patient said; "Miss Savile is quite all right."

"She will be, when she's had experience."

"She doesn't need experience! That would only spoil her!" Cartell protested. "She's a nurse by nature—born full-equipped to her calling—divinely perfect—like Minerva and Shelley and Mozart and—and—don't bring in a new one, please! I've had

enough strange young women giving me sponge-baths."

Outside the door, Doctor Hampden said:

"I begin to think that man has a chance to pull through."

"Talks as if he'd like to," Doctor Fenway assented. "That's something. Didn't much care when he came here.—How about that student-nurse? Too young for the case?"

"Ye-e-s, perhaps, but—er——"

"Yes, precisely. Can't hurt, may help."

A tall, gaunt-figured orderly, standing near, overhears and nods his quixotic head approvingly.

Later, as they were leaving the hospital, Miss Beaux informed them that she had secured another nurse for "73"—graduate—three years' practice—to replace Miss Savile.

"By no means!" they almost chorused. "Patient's in a highly nervous state. A change might alarm him."

"I was only fearing," she explained, "that Miss Savile is rather—inexperienced."

Doesn't matter at present, they assured her; case still desperate. As much a matter of luck, now, as anything. Patient doesn't dislike the nurse, and that's the chief point, after all.

"Yes, of course," Miss Beaux agreed. "And at night, there's Miss Newlands—so resourceful in a crisis! Almost *hears* a change."

Whereat the house-physician laughed and mumbled something.

"I don't like it, myself," Miss Beaux spoke up. "You can't, of course, dictate to a graduate, in such matters, but I've forbidden it, point-blank, to the student-nurses."

When Miss Newlands returned to the room, the patient noted a subtle change—somehow. Case going badly, he thought—the doctors had told her. But, no—he dismissed the fear—Miss Newlands wouldn't betray it—never did—by look, tone, or manner. Miss Savile did, always. An unfavorable symptom—whispered in the hall after the doctor's visit—and back she came breathing hard, eyes wide-open in a droll panic, and lips puckered in a determined smile. That's what made her such a perfect nurse, Cartell figured out—her helpless struggle to look cheerful that any decent patient would will his hardest to justify. He might not get that from an older nurse, inured by experience. Miss Newlands signed nothing—good or bad; tranquil, immobile, cryptic as a sphinx, always.

Until tonight. Now there was a difference, somehow. For one thing, she'd set her cap at a different angle—sort of chip-on-the-shoulder tilt. Becoming, too! But that wasn't the real difference, Cartell decided.

Two or three times, the nurse, glancing up from her book, caught him staring, searchingly, into space.

“Stop thinking, sir,” she recalled him with the usual formula. “Case going splendidly, the doctors say—if that ’s what you’re frowning about.”

“No—I was just wondering—You from this section of the country?”

“Yes, sir—Fayette County—the Blue Grass region.—Good horses, you know.”

“Yes. And do they all have such pretty ears—the women, I mean.”

She really couldn’t say—and she said it icily, as if to freeze admiration in the very bud. Reached for the thermometer, too. Then, with a peal of laughter, though the hall-door was wide-open:—

“This is so sudden, sir!”

“Yes, but I never saw them ’till now.”

“We aim to please,” she quoted, still laughing—at him, he felt uncomfortably and that a patient’s ravings should be a sacred confidence.

“Nurses have a sixth sense,” he ventured fishingly,—“or very near it.”

“We’re never very far from the door,” the sphinx retorted.

*That’s* how she—“Well, it *is* more becoming that way, isn’t it?” he insisted.

“We never contradict a patient—and”—smiling into the mirror—“I think it looks—hideous!” To prove it, she blushed ecstatically. Which a sphinx doesn’t do, without a noble purpose.

And they had questioned *that* personality: ‘Sympathetic, or not?’ They ought to see it now—with

the ears showing! . . . Wherever had he got the fool notion that she wasn't—like Miss Savile—a perfect nurse! Gracious, skilled to accoy, obliging, alert, understanding almost to clairvoyance—everything that Miss Savile was—except, only, not Miss Savile.

“They're not going to change the day-nurse,” Miss Newlands said, “unless you insist.”

(‘Mind-reading?’ he worried: ‘Or did they blab that, too!’)

“We all hope you won't, sir. She'd be terribly hurt if they took her off the case. Counts on it to help her through her exam's. And Dr. Harley says she's doing splendidly.”

(‘Yes, yes, he'd noticed Harley's admiration.’)

“You must try to like Miss Savile. That helps the case a lot.—Quite as much as—experience.”

(‘Hang it, they *did* blab!’)

Her laughter routed his confusion: “Sandra *is* a dear. Always has been. We were at school together.”

“From the same town, then?”

“No, indeed, sir. My home's Fayette County. She's from Isle of Wight.”

“England!”

“Oh, no, sir—Virginia.”

Shocking—one's not knowing that!

So they always “placed” themselves. Never of town, city or even State; invariably county.—A custom enduring perhaps from their English ancestry,

along with certain vocal modulations and the neat turn of some particular locution to general purposes. Thus with "attractive."

In frequency of use and variety, in range of meaning shaded by accent, tone or glance, the word had taken on the handiness of slang and some of the tang. It lacked, perhaps, the tender appeal of "Believe me, Bo!" the gustatory finality of "You've said a mouthful!" the cave-woman defiance and candor of "I'll tell the world!" and the intrigue implied in "Dearie, you don't know half!" Against these lusty lingos of the North, "attractive" might seem wan and slender, and yet on the lips of these women the word was quite as efficient and peculiarly—*attractive*.

Cartell had now first acquaintance of the women of this section. His knowledge hitherto—*notions*, rather—was by hear-say, books, plays. Mostly, plays.

The stage-picture is of two types widely disparate: but both, essentially, *tin-types*. She is either the fiery, sassy mountain girl, with short unkempt locks and a long-barreled shot-gun consecrated to wipe out an entire family in its remotest branches, direct and collateral, because one of 'em "spat at Paw," after betraying his moonshine. Or else she is a grown-up Little Eva, with a curl over one shoulder, a red rose over her ear, and an accent blended of Scottish and African.



Here, now, one might see the reality; and—it so happened—in the finest flower, the pick of the basket, the crack cull of the counties. Many characteristics they had in common, as of a type brought to its best and guarded pure. Yet their differences, too, persisted and were as many as the number of them; being women. But in one quality, constant, dominant, to Cartell astounding, they were singularly alike.

To be patient, gentle and faithful—that is of course; the rules of the game so order; it is the primer of the profession, the creed and the ritual. And the honor of it.

To walk calm, serene and strong through these corridors of sorrow, pain and impending doom: to make a brave show of cheerfulness and confidence: to hearten and refresh the unending march-past of youth and age on the way to its calvary—that, too, is the common-place of their calling. The code of their guild imposes it: all in the day's work: part of the job. And the power of it.

But these women are jolly—frankly, plainly jolly! No text-book on nursing can order that! Nor the song-of-heart at their work, the dance in the eye, the laugh on the lip, the buoyant, tip-toe tread of girlhood.

Youth will be served to gayety—that the lesson of it?—And beauty will have its fling, even while doom cracks?—Unfeeling, the cynic may see it;

cold to suffering; chilled by constant custom of pain, numbed by habitude of tragedy.

That's the honor of it—and the power—and the glory—that they endure the horrendous travail with a show of carelessness, frivolity, flippancy if you like—a blessed flippancy that shames the patient's fears and omens and turns that waiting Shadow from the half-opened door.

Often, you may be sure, the Unbidden Guest lets fall the uplifted latch, turns on his heel and tip-toes away, loth to intrude into such merry company. Tomorrow will do as well for his errand, or tomorrow week. And meanwhile he can call elsewhere; he has a long visiting list—and sometimes a welcome.

Cartell had fled from one hospital, at the crucial moment, in a sudden panic; to the shame of his friends, the scorn of the physicians, the scandal of the sombre, capouched and wimpled nurses; clambered from his bed, squirmed into his clothes, tottered to a taxi, bolted the town, and came begging shelter here.

And no reason for his flight that he could afterwards recall except a colored print of "The Pearly Gates," a shrieking chromo of "The Celestial Choir," and a cubistic Angel Gabriel Blowing his Trumpet in worsted-work. These glared at him from the walls all the while the head-surgeon and the house-physician were assuring him of his prob-

able fate tomorrow—‘Yes, he had some sort of a kind of a chance’ but they ‘didn’t believe in kidding a patient.’ Neither did the pictures.

No such candor here. Rather old-school in that regard. You may die unshriven, if you wait on warning from them. Bare-faced cajolery to the bitter end. The dread night-before—you’re the first on Dr. Fenway’s list in the morning, they tell you, and something of a compliment!—the junior Fenway brings you the opening number of a detective serial and says he’ll see that you don’t miss the successive numbers from week to week! Then he asks where you intend to spend the Summer: tells where to get the best cigars in town and the best motor-roads down the Valley. Sure you’ll get along amiably with your nurses when you come to know them—“awfully nice girls”; his only reference to the business actually in hand, until just as he is leaving he turns to remark casually:

“You know, father was saying at dinner tonight he doesn’t think he’ll find this case complicated at all.”

Thanks, past telling!—“But the radiograph they took—doesn’t that look rather messy?”

“O, you can’t always go by the radiograph. It’s a good deal like the picture of the moon—all right as far as it goes. And, besides, father knows a lot of things radiographs never heard of. He often fools them.”

Contrast all that with: "You've got some sort of a kind of a chance!"

And yet the reaction of first entrance here had been to uneasiness. *Could* this be a good hospital? Nothing like the one from which he had discharged himself the day before. Now, *that* was inescapably a regular hospital, with all the approved stigmata, from the undertaker's smart though severe Black Maria halted shyly in the side street to Wipe Your Feet on the sterilized door-mat, and the mingled greetings, at the threshold, of formaldehyde and gilly-flowers. And, beyond, a long wait in a long hall, a long conference in a group of long faces and, finally, a long list of questions the crux of which is, plainly, where-do-you-wish-the-remains-sent?

Missing, now, all these signs of regularity, you wonder if you've made the mistake of your life—literally—in changing your lodgings. The bearing of the personnel, and all the circumstance, did not connote a hospital. Much too gay and debonair. These people are either frivolous, case-hardened, apathistic, or else—yes, more likely, a festal celebration of some sort today: founder's birthday, or a new ward dedicated, or some exhilarating "sport" of anatomy disclosed in the operating-room—two appendixes instead of one, or even none at all. A trifle like that, he'd often heard, will chirk a hospital to a merriment incomprehensible to laymen.

The aged Buttons who carried his suitcase to

Number Seventy-three remarked the southern exposure of the cubicle as counter-vail to its cramped dimensions. 'Later on, perhaps, there might be something better. Lucky, though, to get in at all. They were always full-up this time of the year.' (Seems this is the height of the season for urgent operations—families being anxious to get the thing over with before making their summer plans. The Maisons-de-deuil, you may have noticed, make especially elaborate window-displays about the middle of March.

Presently, at the hour of form, came a tray with seed-cakes, cinnamon-toast and fragrant Pekoe. And someone whom you've never seen before poured it; poured it quite as real tea, not as medicine—camomile, sage, or cambric—omitting nothing of the ice-breaking ritual: "Lemon or cream?" and, the tongs poised, "How many lumps?—Do try the cinnamon toast." Then, others you'd never seen before, intimates of your sudden hostess, happened in: some with the customary: "Can't stop but a moment" and proving it by a swishing exit when paged by a fretful jingle of the bell-rack.

And the reaction of all this pleasantness is a curious rage, half peevish, half bitter. . . . Why the deuce did all this have to happen? Much too nice a world to quit. Perhaps after all, the manner of that other hospital was the better—easing resignation and dulling regret.

Never would he have noticed there what struck

him now so accusingly: his shoes in need of a shine! And that coat he's wearing—never did hang right. There's a rip in the lining, too—he suddenly recalls. And a nurse—maybe the one who poured tea or she who nibbled seed-cakes so bemusedly—will see it presently! . . . 'What of it? Shabby boots or coat in tatters, when tomorrow, probably' . . .

Socrates is praised for dying like a philosopher. But his hemlock wasn't served at a tea-party.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ELOQUENT RETICENCE OF TWO IVORY STICKS

**M**ISS SAVILE was browsing, lackadaisically, through a stale magazine.

"I've finished this 'Lincoln' book," Cartell said: "Would you care to read it?"

"Not now," she answered, "I must keep at this sweater"—she picked it up quickly—"Miss Newlands will be wanting it."

"At your leisure, then," offering her the volume.

"Thank you, sir, but I'm not particularly interested in—history."

"This isn't exactly history. Rather an apology, or explanation, of England's former attitude toward Lincoln."

He seemed to expect some comment on the belated expression of a nation's repentance. So she said: "Yes, sir."

"There's a great run, just now, on 'Lincoln' books."

"Yes, sir. He seems to be quite fashionable."

"This English author," he went on, "thinks Lincoln a much greater man than George Washington."

"They thought the same, a while ago, of Mr. Wilson,"<sup>1</sup> sprang to her lips. But savored too much of argument with the patient, which the rules forbade. So again, only: "Yes, sir."

As for indicating any real interest, she might just as well have said: "No, sir."

Dense to her eloquent reticence, and merely to make conversation—her voice being pleasant to hear—he asked if the Drinkwater play had been done here.

"Oh, yes, indeed! Some thought it quite attractive."

"You didn't go to see it?"

No; she was on night-duty that week. Of course they gave matinees, but she had to sleep in the afternoons—or study—or go to a movie—or—something!

He should have suspected annoyance from the fashed tone of 'something,' but—"You'll find a printed copy of the play among those books on the table."

"Thank you, but I can't read plays—easily. I suppose one must get used to it.—And speaking of Mr. Washington"—whom he had already forgotten—"isn't it only lately the English began to find him *at all* attractive?"

<sup>1</sup> With such a man [Wilson] at the helm at home we can do whatever we wish to do with the English. No man has been in the White House who is so regarded since Lincoln; in fact, they didn't regard Lincoln while he lived.—*From a letter of W. H. Page, when Ambassador to England.*



He allowed that since the War there had been, perhaps, a somewhat livelier laying-on of hands-across-the-sea.

“Yes, sir. Because we had an English girl here, in last year’s class; sent over from Bedford College to study American nursing methods. Most attractive creature—Girton graduate. But the strangest notions about General Washington! Insisted we-all in this country knew nothing of his real character: that our school-books had deliberately deified him, in order to justify the Revolution. Why, as a small boy, she told us, he was *extremely* cruel to dumb animals. So that the story of the Cherry Tree was invented to conceal the actual facts. It wasn’t a cherry tree at all that he cut down, she said: it was a cat’s tail. His mother’s pet cat’s tail. And she had other tales, even more—more——”

“Apocryphal?”

“Well, I shouldn’t care to call them that, sir, but they were not the sort of stories that you’d naturally associate with a Virginia gentleman.”

“Including,” Cartell guessed, “their dramatic account of the General’s taking-off?”<sup>1</sup>

“No, no, she never told us that one,” Miss Savile interrupted with suspicious promptness and presence.

“But, coming back to Lincoln——”

<sup>1</sup>This story has long been prevalent in England. The present writer had it, richly embellished, from one of the most erudite figures of the British stage.

"You mustn't, sir. You've talked quite enough for so early in the day."

Her clicking needles pointed the hint.

Cartell, still not comprehending,—dull as ditch-water, these days, with mental processes about as responsive as an omelet-soufflé—unpercipient even of her plain purpose in diverting the theme, took up the book she had declined, and quoted the author's conviction:—

"The South has long since come to realize that in Lincoln they lost their best friend."

Miss Savile, absorbed in a mis-stitch, said nothing.

She could say nothing in several languages. Most eloquently with two ivory sticks and a skein of yarn. . . . Men avoiding answer go on sawing wood. Gretchen went on cutting bread-and-butter. Penelope, in ancient epic, twiddled her tapestries. Her sister, in modern novel, goes on munching marrons.

These young women keep on knitting sweaters. Which they never wear—not their own, at any rate. Miss Savile, working for weeks in old-rose, appears one day in fire-fly-green with which Miss Newlands had been occupied for the same period. And the latter cosies in the burnt-orange wrought by Miss Condé, who looks very well in Miss Savile's pinkish achievement. So the juggle went on, through the entire class, as though some kind of game; for as soon as there'd been a complete shift of jerseys all around, they at once began new ones.

Skethway, a jockey who lately joined the Porch Club—his mount had thrown him from Pimlico into a Gatch-bed for a month—got to thinking of the polychromatic yarns as racing-silks and made a mind-book on how the colours would show—that is, who would wear which. He lost every bet.

Miss Savile's silence piqued Cartell's curiosity—prodded a doodle brain-cell—and out popped the question:

“Lincoln did mean well by the South, didn't he?”

“No, he didn't!” flashed back the answer, with enough temper to startle him. Sensing his blunder, he tried to edge out:

“Well, at any rate, after the war?”

“No, never, never—he never meant well by the South! And they all may go on writing books from now to Doomsday, but they'll never make us believe—I beg your pardon, sir, and we're forbidden ever to argue with a patient about anything under the sun, but if you knew how much—how dreadfully—you do need a shave, sir. I'll go fetch the barber—and he must trim your hair today.”

“O, let it go till next time.”

“Certainly not, sir. Miss Allyn will be calling this afternoon. She 'phoned early this morning that she'd be here, and bring your friend, Mr.—Jerome?—I'm-afraid,-sir”—between downward flicks of the thermometer—“that you're having—too much—unnecessary—company!” And she scored the adject-

tive by a particularly violent thrust of the instrument.

Cartell had come to read Miss Savile's moods and tempers as clearly as she read his temperature. . . . Had there been a scene with Miss Beaux, the superintendent; or with Harley, the dressing-surgeon, kept waiting for sleepy-patients. Had she danced the evening before and gone to the play, or been kept in by 'those horrid, old examination-papers.' Had she dined well today, at the nurse's-table—roast-beef 'stead of messy goulasch,—ice-cream-meringue for dessert 'stead of those 'same-old-stewed-prunes' or, au-choix, Brown-Betty—Miss Savile herself gave no sign. But the thermometer—the way she hurled the mercury to the bottom of the tube!

And all the while Tony, the barber, was telling Cartell what he—and plenty other barbers, too—believe-a-me!—still-a thought of Pres'den' Weelson, slashing simultaneously at Cartell's hair and the Peace-a-League and the high cost of barbers'-supplies—"bay-rum—capperi!—an' frizerine an' the weetcha-hazel like-a they was-a the fine's Lacrima-Christ'-Spumante"—through Cartell's mind ran a series of names and dates; Sumter—Shiloh—Gettysburg—Richmond—Appomattox—and on down from '65 through faded Presidencies up to the vivid Restoration. Began and finished, the tragedy, decades before the girl was born—he was thinking—and she still remembers!

"How you think-a, Signor?" asked the barber

whose blame of the Virginian had now jumped from frizerine to Fiume—"You no think-a, Signor?"

"Yes, yes, Tony. They *are* a different race. 'East is East and West is West' is only half the story. North is North and South is South—and, on that one point at least, never yet the twain have met—whatever they may do at Fiume—eh, Tony?"

"Si, si, Signor—'zactamente lak' d'Annunzio say!" Tony assented, so pleased he gave an actual spurt of weetcha-hazel, not the mere gesture as heretofore.

A smile of auspice—if you but knew it! Your chances have improved, decisively. Tony has been told so, just now, by the nurse, with sharp hint for improvement on his part, too. "Scissors, today—not horse-clips."

Regularly, the hospital-barber works in a spirit of frank pessimism. "You probably won't need another hair-cut," his usual manner says. Those razor "nicks" he's giving you—neck, cheek and ear—"No one will ever see them where you're going." Even, he doesn't mention his hair-tonic.

## CHAPTER VII

### A LESSON IN SICK-ROOM DEPARTMENT

**I**N HER quality of fiancée to a patient Margot was of more than common interest to the nurses. Any visitor in similar circumstance would be. The savor of romance seems to be peculiarly grateful to them. They sense the attar in its faintest incipience, and tend the bud with zeal and skill until it reaches fullest flower, or wilts—as may happen—in the frost of relentless charts. A case that first sprouts under their eye they follow up with academic concern, as though to complete the record. A theory is involved; at least a guild-tradition: ‘Matches are made in heaven—parlor-matches, many of them that flare brilliantly for a second, then sputter out; but the matches that burn steadily to the end—the fusee kind that won’t blow out in a storm—those matches are made in hospitals.’

A tragic finish doesn’t necessarily kill their interest: ensures, rather, fond recollection. A case that knowing the end to be near and certain insists on a bed-side marriage—at midnight preferably—is sure to be pleasantly remembered. . . . ‘Miss Allyn, with her high color and curt looks, would certainly

look well in weeds'—'Yes, and she'd be keen to try them'—the Bishop's daughter opined—'for a month or two, anyway.'

Margot had exacted a promise, both from Miss Newlands and Miss Savile, to summon her from New York by 'phone at the first sign of a *really* bad turn. Two or three times, in the earlier weeks, anticipation keeping pace with the patient's temperature ran high; but luck and Carrel-Dakin intervened to prevent the diversion. Much to the satisfaction of Miss Beaux who hated anything "sensational" in connection with B. M. H.: "And it *will* get into the newspapers—that sort of thing!"

Lessening chance each day now of any such development. Of course you never can tell with absolute certitude; but just before Margot's arrival Miss Savile was saying, in the chart-room, with quite an air of authority and some professional pride:

"Number Seventy-Three is certainly getting on!"

"Well, he'd best be quick about it," a soft brogue advised, "or by the time he gets out he'll be Number Twenty-three."

"Bosh, Killarney! Any one can see Miss Allyn's devotion."

"Sure you can. She brings him along every time she calls here."

"Not *every* time," Sandra contradicted, "if you mean Mr. Jerome."

"If that's the name—of Number One. Attractive, too, isn't he?"

"And my patient always enjoys their visits. I take care to notice."

"Take his pulse next time," Killarney laughed: "You owe it to your patient, Sandra."

Today's visit, however, denied trial to the jesting advice. Margot arrived alone, without the usual escort—as Miss Savile had intimated.

Her manner with the patient was a lesson in sick-room deportment. Here she abandoned all set forms; turned intensely individual, original, bizarre. Disdained every "accepted" phrase and spirit of such occasion—the ordered inquiries as to state of health, the trite and frank mendacities of appearance. Either she had no ken of human ill-being or concealed it most cleverly. Inspiring it was, too—her light, off-hand greeting of him—quite as though an agreeable acquaintance she'd happened on at the street-corner or soda-fountain.

Fell at once upon subjects wholly unrelated to the immediate conditions:—

"Are you up to a good laugh?"

"I'll risk it."

"Whom do you suppose I saw at the Hunt Club last night?—Three guesses!"

"Miss Savile."

"Now how'd you happen to think of her, first off?"

"She happened to mention the dance, yesterday."



“Tacky thing to talk about to a man as sick as you are. I suppose, though, as time goes on, they *will* get chatty.”

“Part of the job, Margot: lest we forget there are still cakes-and-ale, outside.”

“She told you, of course, that I spoke with her?”

“No.” Nor that she’d seen Miss Allyn. In fact, had said nothing of the dance today.

“Discreet little owl, isn’t she?”

Also part of the job, he supposed. “But she’s been more than ordinarily reserved this morning.”

“Still half-asleep, probably.”

Seems fairly chipper, he said, on some subjects. “Able to do a lot of knitting.”

“But I thought they had to be in by ten o’clock, always.”

There are special dispensations, he believed, for dances.

“For their clothes, too, I’d imagine. You should have seen her! You’d never take her for the demure prunes-and-prisms creature in blue-gingham. All lit up—in turquoise charmeuse—newest model, too—quite extreme—like a smart little mannequin on parade. It *was* funny!”

He didn’t rise to the humour; so she elaborated the picture.

“And all the men seemed crazy to dance with her; cut in on one another outrageously. You’d have laughed to see that! And the way she dances—quite

like a professional! Where do you suppose she picked it up—with all her exacting duties here?"

Southern women, he had heard, were, naturally, good dancers.

"Yes, but there's a limit. One isn't supposed to dance like a girl in the Follies—not a nurse at any rate—and dancing her head off! That struck one as particularly funny."

Somehow it didn't strike him as funny: the picture of Miss Savile, 'dancing her head off' in 'extreme' gown, tossed about from one partner to another—and 'all crazy to dance with her.'

None of his business, of course! Ridiculous even to think about it! Why shouldn't she? These girls—some of 'em—would eat their hearts out, if they didn't dance their heads off occasionally.

And yet, somehow, he couldn't get the fun of it—as Margot did.

Must have shown it, too, from her next remark: "I believe you're jealous."

"That *is* funny!" And this time he did laugh.

"Well, if you'd seen the look on your face just now—"

His glance went to the dresser-mirror across the room.

"That's a pretty thing to get jealous—over any woman—like Miss Savile.—By the way, have you noticed her resemblance to——"

"O, I suppose you're going to say Elsie Ferguson, or Ann Pennington or Joan of Arc."

He promptly withdrew the Greuze painting from the conversation.

“Jerry says he hopes, for your sake, that she’s wiser than she looks.”

“She isn’t,” Cartell said enigmatically. “Case doesn’t require it.—A patient takes alarm if the nurse appears to be hiding something behind a deceptive mask.—Miss Savile is just as she looks.”

“How can you know what she’s really like?—Wait till you’ve seen her—as I did, last night—out of that tricky uniform. A very different story, off parade—I’ll tell the world! Jerry—eh—eh—Mister Jerome was telling me of a case they had in the house; his young brother—Jack—all het-up over the parlour-maid; dippy, drooling dippy over the creature. His mother was utterly sick for fear he’d marry her; kept the girl so she could keep an eye on her. And on the girl’s day out Mrs. Jerome always got a heart-attack and wouldn’t let Jack leave the house. But one night he sneaked the girl out to a Ritz dinner and a show, and came home completely cured. Just because he’d seen the hussy in street-clothes without her cap and apron.”

The nurse came in to confirm a list of errands on which she was starting:—“Bank—tobacco—magazines—shaving-brush—pumps—pajamas. — Think of anything else, sir?”

She really needn’t bother with all that—Margot interrupted sweetly: “You must be dead-beat—

after last night. I didn't expect to see you here. I thought surely this must be your day off."

"We are not having days off at present."

"But, you poor child, you must be all-in. You look it, too."

"I hope the patient hasn't noticed any marked change."

He did, now. She wore, for the street, a tailored-suit of tan cloth: gloves and shoes of suede to match; the hat, of the same stuff as the dress, and made sailor-fashion, accented most of all the contrast with the nurse's costume. Margot was right: a very different story, 'off parade.'

"But I noticed you didn't miss a dance last night, and never refused a cut-in. And when I left—quite half-past two—you were still going strong."

"I can stand a lot of dancing."

"Yes, you must—and still be fit for your duties here."

They generally managed, somehow, the nurse said, to combine the two.

"Well, I hope you didn't oversleep, and miss your breakfast. Some ungodly hour, isn't it?"

"Seven o'clock. But I had mine long before—about five. We stopped dancing then for ham-and-eggs, pop-overs and coffee. Some of us always wait for the pop-overs. They're *most* attractive!—I brought some home for Mr. Cartell's breakfast, but they flopped disgracefully.—The hall-nurse will

watch your bell, sir," she advised him. "And I won't be long."

"Thank you!" he said, with much more meaning than he intended.

His glance followed her beyond the door.

"Well?" Miss Allyn recalled him: "What did I tell you?"

"Yes. Astonishing, isn't it?"

"You'd hardly recognize her for the same girl, would you?"

"No. The uniform does make a difference.—She's a dream in street-clothes!"

As Margot was leaving, Mrs. Moncrieff came in for a quick word of cheer to the patient: she had to hurry down to the banking-district, before it quit for the day. Margot promptly offered a lift. She was going in that direction: "Mr. Jerome was good enough to send his car."

"Last I heard, he was in Havana," Mrs. Moncrieff said, rather tartly.

"No, he's returned for the races. I met him on the train, this morning. He meant to come along, today,"—she told Cartell.

"So you 'phoned."

"Yes—but that bossy little nurse said not to. Is that part of the job—to regulate the patient's visiting-list."

"Much is left to their discretion," Mrs. Moncrieff

answered. "Must be, my dear; so many visitors have none."

In the car the elder woman scarcely noticed her companion's presence. She was quite engrossed in conversation—now with someone on the running-board, now with herself; a tempestuous scene, evidently, from the repeated toss of her head and the swift-moving lips.

There'd been a troubled meeting of the Board of Directors: the usual anxious discussion of the hospital's finances. Some costly repairs and renovations were needed, and the funds lacking.

Mrs. Comley-Draycott cut the debate, rather impatiently—she had to run away to an engagement—by telling them to go ahead with the work, and she'd pay for it out of her own pocket.

No, no, the Board wouldn't hear of it!—"You're always doing that sort of thing, my dear, and it isn't fair, nor business-like."

"Pooh! What does the whole thing amount to—eight or ten thousand dollars?"

"Not over six," they told her.

"O, 't isn't worth talking about.—Have the job done—the house does look shabby—and send the bill to me."

Moment she'd gone the Board voted to defer the repairs until the money was in hand; they couldn't act on Mrs. Comley-Draycott's generous offer; wasn't business-like. They had done so on several occasions and——

The lady was far the wealthiest member of the Board, and famously extravagant.—The emerald brooch she wore today had been the Empress Eugenie's: the pink-pearl ring Mrs. Burdett-Coutts'. She had, too, the longest string of pierced diamonds south of the Hudson river and, possibly, the shortest memory. When the Board was at wit-ends, awhile ago, for a new wing, she ordered an architect, on her own account, to go ahead with the plans; and the contractors to go ahead with the estimates; and then she'd gone ahead to Europe. In such slight matters as painters, plumbers, carpenters, new ambulances, she was, of course, utterly prodigal; but so absent-minded! Hence today's decision of the Board, and Mrs. Moncrieff's hurried "drive" in the banking district.

Cuddled in a corner of the velvet-wheeling van, Margot remarked its splendours with sigh of luxurious content:

"This man does have the nicest cars!"

"Good lord! You wouldn't throw him over on that account, would you?"

"I'm not likely to get the chance—under the circumstances. He couldn't—decently—ask me."

"*Ask?*—Who?"

"Why—why—I thought you meant——"

"Yes—and you ought to be spanked for thinking of it!"

"But I'm *not*—really. You don't suppose I'd do anything as rotten as that?"

"No. That would be the limit, even for an armadillo—or *dasypus-villosus*, to put it mildly."

"Don't trouble on my account. But, really, if he's going to be an invalid——"

"He isn't going to be. Doctor Hampden just told me. He'll either get well or he—won't."

"Let's hope so! Still, it'll be a long time—a year, anyway—before he's fully recovered."

"He'll be out of his cage in a month. And you'll see how he'll pick up, in the woods."

"Yes, but, mother says that after what he's gone through, we can't be quite certain that he'll ever be a very *strong* man. And under the circumstances I'm not sure I ought to marry him."

"No! Not if you're looking for a hammer-thrower or a cow-puncher."

They rode for some time in silence; then Margot observed: "I believe that nurse is rather interested in him."

"Don't be yakkish! A girl like that doesn't take to a scare-crow."

"He isn't even that." Margot sighed: "Doesn't look strong enough to frighten dickey-birds. Still, one can understand how the constant association——"

"Precisely," Mrs. Moncrieff snapped: "You, who've never seen him,—till now,—except at his best—fall out of love with him—oh, you can't help



it!—and yet think this nurse who sees him only at his worst—worn to a bone-rack—and he can't hide it from her!—you think she's fallen in! That's against all reason and nature—like the Australian ornithorhynchus.”

“Well, at any rate, he's interested in her.”

“I hope to heaven he is—now that you're going to throw him over.”

“I haven't the remotest intention—at this moment.”

“Bah! I'm not an old bat that blinks in the daylight—and I'm not going to play ostrich and pretend not to see. . . . I don't ask you to be an apterdyx—or is it phoenix?—that fire-insurance bird that consumes itself in sacrificial flames when its mate dies. What you're doing is quite natural; most of the females 'mong the lower animals behave just that way when the mate sickens. Though in my stories I always have 'em stick around 'till the very end, seeing that I write for very young people. But do, please, let him down easy, by degrees. Wait until he's fed up enough to stand the shock. And, meanwhile, when you call to see him, tie your giraffe outside.”

“ ‘Giraffe’ ?”

“Of course, Jerome can't help having a neck like that; but he needn't wear those high collars that always make me think of a camelopard poking his head out of the top of a circus-wagon. 'Tisn't necessary and 'tisn't decent. I mean your always bringing

him along—as you planned today—when you come on these sleep-in-peace visits to the hospital. The only animal that does that sort of thing brazenly is a species of hyena in Abyssinia—the *Hyæna Striata*. When its mate gets wobbly the female immediately sets up a yowl for his successor, and the two of them take up the death-watch, grinning from head to tail—which the departing male doubtless takes for the merry ha-ha.”

To which the young woman retorted that the Abyssinians were doubtless following a perfectly natural instinct of eugenics, besides showing a very sensible attitude toward life in general.

“Anyway,” she challenged, “that’s how I feel about such things. Life, to my notion, is a good deal like restaurants; the chic ones don’t serve half-portions.—And if a man chooses to be an invalid,” she *would* insist, “he really ought to marry a nurse. Mother thinks it would be marvelous for him—positively.”

“But not for the nurse, thank mother kindly. Miss Savile, I imagine, has other plans. And I can’t see her attached to a *confirmed* wheel-chair. ’Tisn’t done at B. M. H. All the hospital marriages of my observation started as going concerns and kept it up. When a nurse marries her case you may be sure he’s what the insurance-folks call a first-class risk.”

Addressing, then, society at large rather than her immediate neighbor, Mrs. Moncrieff advised

that any patient, dubious of his eventual restoration, propose marriage to his nurse: "If she answer 'yes,' he may take it confidently, even against the consensus of the faculty, for the last word in favorable prognosis. She knows!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T WAIT ON BROADWAY

A UNIQUE factor in the inner life of this unique hospital—one of its intimate traditions passed on from class to class by word of mouth, as with Homeric epic—was Captain Jim's dress-suit. There was, of course, no official recognition of the anomaly; but its existence was a matter of general knowledge and, in some quarters, of proper pride.

He was, in the far-flung hospital circles of the town, the only man of his station who regularly donned evening clothes on his night 'off. In living memory he had never changed the custom nor the cut of the coat which bore, on the inside breast-pocket, the arms of a family of "artist-tailors," famous in New York even before Mrs. Wharton's age-of-innocence. No heavy alien hand had ever sullied the lines of the chef-d'oeuvre. The velvet collar and cuffs had been renewed from time to time; the cloth of the lapels replaced, latterly, by satins; but such restorations were done always in the atelier of its origin, by père, fils and grand-fils successively. There, too, it was sent twice each year, just before

the opera season and the Graduation, for pressing.

Though Cartell had been told the legend, he stared bewildered at the picturesque figure that walked in, unushered and unannounced, a capacious Inverness over his left arm, a crush-hat under his right. Not until the man spoke did he recognize the seeming stranger for Captain Jim, whom till now he'd seen only in the white duck of an orderly.

"I'm off this evening, sir, to the play—a new one. If you like, I'll look in on my return, and tell you of it."

"By all means, Captain.—I've been told you never miss a first-night at the theatre."

"Not if my duties here permit, sir."

"I notice that quite a number of new plays are announced for the first production here."

"Always at this season, sir; and, indeed, throughout the year. It is one of the charms of the city—these numerous 'try-outs'; but slightly appreciated, I regret to say—very slightly! Many persons resent it as unconstitutional on the part of the metropolitan managers; object to being made the goat, as they term it. An advantage, I call it, constitutional advantage. It enables one to judge a play without the bias of metropolitan vogue, and before reading what the New York critics say. Most persons, here, choose to wait on Broadway. Personally, I prefer being the goat to a sheep."

Cartell recalled hearing somewhere—from Mrs. Moncrieff, but he'd forgotten—that a like sentiment

regarding the theatre prevailed in the medical circles of the community.

Yes, they are naturally venturesome, the Captain confirmed; the temperament of their profession. "But outside their circle the prevalent spirit is conservative, radically conservative.

"Best mayor this town ever had"—he went on, rather to himself—"best any town—was put out of office because he *wasn't* conservative—with our cobblestones and Rogers-style statues and keep-off-the-grass signs in the parks. . . . Trouble is, sir, some folks confuse conservatism with—catalepsy."

When the Captain looked in, keeping promise to tell of the play, it must have been, presumably, near midnight. In some hospitals a social call at such hour might be irregular, even eccentric. Not so at B. M. H.

That was one of the precious idiosyncrasies of the Hospital—the "hours;" there were none. When dared too far, the hall-clock discreetly hid its face; its hands withheld nothing from the vagaries of a patient. If he fancied his supper about the same time the doctors took theirs: or if, disdaining the loneliness of sleep, he begged a round of "rum"—the night-watch played gooseberry.

"Jim" Forrester's brevet-title, in the roster of the hospital, was Librarian. Half-a-score book-cases had filled, in the passing of time and patients, with a motley collection of novels and magazines, most of them old enough to comport sociably with the

horse-hair sofa and rockers, the argand drop-light on the marble-topped table of walnut, the steel-engravings of "The Death of the Stag," "Hippocrates Refusing the Gifts of Artaxerxes," mezzotints of "The Melton Hunt-Breakfast," "Martha Washington" and "The Brighton Mail-Coach" that furnished the little room. Wardship of this random farrage made Forrester Librarian. Certain dowagers of the Board of Directors chose to address him, on occasion, as Professor; and so, too, did some of the student-nurses until they got the hang of things. Then they fell in with the common custom, and called him Captain.

He might easily have been Captain, one time or another, from his military bearing and the strict discipline with which he directed the orderlies. For that, too, was among his manifold offices. In the operating room, attendant to the surgeons, he evinced such quickness, surety, aptness that one might think he had, sometime or other, studied the craft. Indeed, there was belief, among the humbler service, that the Captain could be trusted, in a pinch, with a broken leg or appendix.

His handy-andy uses, his Crichton-rise to an emergency, had summed to a maxim: "In a jam, call Jim." When need was he ran the elevator, drove the ambulance, repaired the plumbing, quieted thumping radiators and comforted the home-sick in the children's ward. This last was his especial delight. You could always tell the Captain was there

by the shouts of laughter and jumps of jollity on the top-floor; particularly on his pay-day or when they were running well for him at Pimlico or Havre-de-Grace.

Each successive class had its own version of the romance. As time went on the Captain rallied a procession of misty figures from history, legend and fancy. Long ago he was the posthumous son of Aaron Burr. Then, by daring invention, of Morgan, the free-mason who talked too much in his sleep to a garrulous wife. There came a class that whispered: 'John Wilkes Booth'!

Fancy in lighter vein broke the Captain's heart over Jenny Lind or Adelina Patti, Lydia Thompson, Nellie Lingard, or a dancing-girl in "The Black Crook." Only the element of time saved him from the woes of the Dauphin, The Iron Mask, or the arms of Catherine of Russia. More recent romance, losing courage and cunning, gave him a college-diploma—*summa cum laude*—and drove him to drink. Whereby the world lost a possible Greek-professor and won a dandy orderly.

His language bespoke precise education, save in the case of one word which he threw into comment quite carelessly and confusingly: hit-or-miss, as though ignorant of its meaning but liking the sound of the word. So that one might incline to believe that the Captain had been, sometime or other, a "constitutional" lawyer.



On rare occasions he had been almost persuaded to break his long silence, but never got far beyond —“Years ago, long before I came here”—Then he'd break off abruptly:

“No, no! *La commedia e finita!*” and hum the final bars of “*Pagliacci*.”

He had, in rumour, rich relations and an allowance. He had, in fact, something pleasant and reliable: a peculiarly nice sense of values in a race-horse and the close study of pedigree, form and performance.

This knowledge he would share generously with the entire personnel of the hospital and with patients of whom the nurses gave pleasant report. Despite the modesty of his wagers, his appearance in the betting-ring always flurried the talent and caused a shift in the odds. Certain book-makers paled at the sight of what they called “hospital-money.” There were bitter memories of some of the Captain's uncanny parleys. With “tips,” “hunches,” even “stable information,” he would not traffic: dismissed them as “unconstitutional.” The which, altogether, enabled him to keep his state in a comfortable cottage, with well-tended close, hard-by the hospital: to smoke cigars defiant of Trusts: to have his clothes pressed by a student of the Bell's: to secure his declining years against the devices of Mr. Volstead, whom he declared utterly “unconstitutional.”

From his office of Librarian, a delicate responsibility fell on Forrester: the choice of reading-matter for the patients.

In the public wards, peopled mainly from the ruder walks, the problem was simple enough. Truckmen, dock-workers, car-drivers, street-pavers; scrub-women, factory-girls, candy-wrappers, an occasional fizgig salvaged from the street—for these the elder classics sufficed: Dickens, Thackeray, Walter Scott, "Monte Cristo," Kipling, Sherlock Holmes. . . . But the private rooms required other fare and handling. There Forrester confronted the politer wits of the well-to-do; persons of ease and, often, of ennui; tastes polished by learning and tempered by sophistication. These, of course, called for the literature of the hour. To meet their demand and yet avoid all possible complications of neurosis or psychosis, was a nice business.

Forrester, modest of his own literary judgment, took guidance from the house-physicians. To them he submitted the calls of the convalescents; almost always for some sensation of the moment, most of which came to the Library by gift or abandonment.

These critical clinics made a refreshing finish to the day's work; were as a savoury to the midnight-supper, where, even without that, the staff did themselves very well.

Mostly, their minds were single to their calling, diverting never or rarely to subjects unrelated to their work. And then only for sheer distraction.

They read, yes, almost anything and everything that fell to hand; but with half-an-eye, skippingly, at odd moments between charts, patients, rounds and watches.

Their taste in books, as in the theatre, was for the lightsome. They loathed the morbid; suspected a mental lesion in the author. Such a tale as "He Reached for the Moon"—

"How the deuce did that get in the house?" Kreweson demanded.

"Number Thirty-nine brought it in—man who tries to jump out the window."

"No wonder—after reading that!"

Forrester was sorry: the patient particularly wanted something by that author.

"No other work of his in the library?"

"Yes," after a moment's reflection, "we have his 'Shackles' "—and he turned to Doctor Braxton inquiringly.

"Fine!—up to the last chapter. Then the hero, having a minute to spare, seduces the daughter of his one faithful friend—man who saved him from the gutter. . . . And they say the English have no sense of humour!"

By ordinary, and by tacit accord, Doctor Braxton took headship of these reviews. Author himself, in a way, his work on "Gynæcology" ranking with Inchcape's and Playfair's. He alone of the staff chased the literary may-flies as they rose, possibly relating them, somewise, to the subject in which he

specialized. . . . He didn't have to go deep into a book to know what was inside; any more than he had to—well, often he could tell from a glance at the “jacket,” or some such external. Thus, now, to Forrester bringing for judgment the novel of the hour and displaying the frontispiece: A Bedouin, lance couched, astride Schreyer's eternal gray mare; in the middle-distance a minaret, a prayer-rug, a trencher of couscous under a date-palm; on the horizon-line, a brooding dromedary.

Braxton squinted the tropic glare, and snorted:

“Yes, I know it. One of those sex-siroccos. Starts at Shepheard's Hotel, of course, on the terrace—they all do; goes crazy with the heat in the Desert, and swoons out in Biskra, kissing a camel.—In the discard, Captain.”

Timidly the librarian demurred there were eager requests for the book.

“Nothing doing here, tell them. Better wait till they get out for that sort of thing.”

A patient had asked for a sea-story: Forrester was thinking, from the title, to offer “*Mare Nostrum*”——

“Y-e-s, perhaps—but that's no sea-story. It's a woman.—Whole book,” to his colleagues, “about *one* woman—and a kiss. Page after page smeared with *one* kiss.”

His literary decrees, regularly, went unquestioned; but now there was surprise, at least, when he

sealed the mooted "Gherkins" with: "Yes, Captain, that one's all right."

"'Gherkins'—all right!" protested Harley. "Ever read it?"

"*Tried* to—mighty hard.—*You* read it?"

"No—but—that copy's priceless! Book was suppressed, you know, by the authorities—day after it was published."

"Day before, probably. Don't see how they ever managed it. Took some wire-pulling to get *that* suppressed. 'Bout as naughty as pink pop."

He made short work of "Corn-Silk"—a tale of the Middle-West—the novelist's nympheum at the moment:—"Madame Bovary, on the banks of the Wabash," his only comment.

An honest but engaging document in which Hymen is stripped, tarred-and-feathered, rail-ridden, and then smothered in the horse-pond—*that* he advised the Librarian should circulate only to the married patients or the very aged. "And, above all, Captain, keep it out of the public wards."

"Tilly of the Toll-Gate," though a stranger, caught his fancy, with the title's promise of a rustic Cinderella under harvest-moons. Then he noted the sub-title:

"'An Unblenching Study of Feminine Psychology.'—That's enough," he growled, and tossed it aside.

If from these critiques you put him down—or up—for puritan you miss your guess. His creed of

letters might seem ascetic: but his philosophy of life was not the least so, nor even acescent. At the Graduation Dance, presently, you will see him shake a heel lively as the best of them; he keened now the passing of claret from the Doctors' table; his work on "Gynæcology" has a good word to say for the seraglio—not of endorsing but of understanding. He would deny, and hotly, that the books he banned were 'immoral.' It was simply, he'd contend, that they dealt with something not meant to write about nor talk about nor think about: but only to do!

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PSYCHOSIS OF DOUGHNUTS AT MIDNIGHT

**A** FRIEND asked Pierre Lorillard—the D'Orsay of his hour—how much a man should have to get along comfortably.

“A thousand dollars a day,” he answered—“and expenses.”

That—the scale enlarged, of course—would be the ideal endowment of a great hospital. None has ever attained it. Wouldn't recognize it if they saw it. Wouldn't be satisfied anyway—not a really great hospital. One of that quality always seeks more, needs more, spends more. The hospital with a sleeping-surplus has sleeping-sickness. Wanting nothing, it wants most.

B. M. H. lived up to the proud tradition of its caste. Income was always short-of-breath, trying to keep up with out-go. At times the strain may have been heart-breaking; but the secret was kept in the family. No patient ever guessed it. Yes, most of the furnishings were late Victorian and early Grand-Rapids, but that gave the place its peculiarly home-like aspect. The archaic solidity of the structure

secured it against the easy intrusion of "modern conveniences," thereby preserving its distinguished air of serenity and luxury. Reminded, rather, of one of those ancient inns, beautifully out of repair, conducted by the same family for generations, and where the entertainment within contrasts so amazingly with the show without.

The polite prodigality of the ménage recalled that Southern President who maintained open-board at the White House and described himself as "living in magnificent bankruptcy." That, perhaps, a patient might have suspected from the meal-trays. Only, he came to believe, gradually, that Magic ran the place: not economics.

Service was table d'hôte, à la carte, grill or buffet; and the dining-car was never side-tracked. When the marketing fell short, Magic stepped in—any time.

Tonight, for instance, long after the doctors' table had utterly exhausted the larder, Miss Newlands opened the door of the completely empty ice-box, and out flew a roast chicken, flanked by a covey of hors-d'oeuvres—olives, celery, shrimps, saucisson-de-Bologne, radishes, cucumbers—and pursued by a salade-gambetta. Then, shoving for place on the tray, came ice-cream, éclairs, macaroons, and finally, a punnet of Homburgs; not only the black Colmars, the rare white Alexandrines, but the once-in-a-blue-moon Akbars.



'Impossible! Not to be had at this season, for love or money!'

No, nor for anything else but Magic!

And why doubt that? You've seen a Keller, Thurston, even a pagan Wu, draw a litter of rabbits, a mess of trout, a boiled ham, from a top-hat, and merely to amuse an idling throng. Now, why should Magic fail an earnest nurse and the capricious hunger of the helpless sick?

Dietetics, in the practice of Miss Newlands, was an exact science, adamant as trigonometry. She adhered rigidly to the system of the great Doctor Abernethy, which he deduced and formulated from forty years of brilliant, crusty service to mankind.

"Tell me, doctor," a patient asked—"what should I eat?"

"How the devil can I tell you that?" the old sour-ball barked. "No one knows what you should eat, except God Almighty and yourself."

The wisdom of the system proved itself brilliantly in the case of Cartell. The nurse, of course, never doubted its virtues in the least; Miss Newlands wasn't one to take chances. But the first time she assembled before her patient one of these audacious, barbaric menus, such as he had just consumed, he drew back, startled, frightened—wondering.

"Won't hurt you, sir," Miss Newlands assured, sensing his question: "nothing you like can possibly hurt you."

So he nibbled; testingly at first, gingerly, fear-

fully. Then noting, after iced cucumbers, that he still lived—ate carelessly, boldly, relishing. Until nothing of the lawless feast survived—except himself. That pleased him mightily, and heartened somewhat. His mind not wholly at ease, perhaps—some tiny doubt still lingered after the ice-cream, doughnuts, bananas, and Russian tea—but, come what may, he still lived! The minutes passed—an hour—two—and still alive! The tower-clock boomed midnight—and all's well. All alive! Never better! Great man—Abernethy! And Miss Newlands, too—greater. *He* thought only in terms of digestion. She figures on psychology. Knows the spiritual effect on a patient who discovers that he can mix bolognas and bananas, pickles and ice-cream, crullers and cheddar—and not merely live but feel all the better for it.

'Fully recovered'—the patient decided—'that's what it means!' (See the nurse's scheme?) 'Out of here in a week!' (Note the psychic palingenesis—from the sausage!) 'Couldn't have been so dreadfully ill, in the first place.' (Catch the psychosis of the doughnuts?—He's forgetting!)

\*            \*            \*            \*

A gentle, half-whispered: "Good-night, sir," and the closed door leaves him alone with his surging thoughts—alone except for the sentry on post at the threshold:—faithful, watchful, alert, quick to alarm at faintest approach of danger.

So they figure to him: Sentries guarding the spark of life that may still be left to him: that burns so feebly—flickers and sputters—the dread Enemy need but snap his fingers to put it out.

He lay awake long after the nurse had bade him good-night.—He held off sleep, easily, with pillow-fights and festal thoughts of his restoration, proved now beyond peradventure of doubt or doughnuts. He was excited, exhilarated, delightfully disturbed by that strange new sense of security—or something.—‘Great mind—Miss Newlands!—And old Abernethy—he was no slouch, either,—for all his grouchiness.’—Altogether, a pleasant world—too sweet to forego even for a dream-while. And so, presently, when sleep threatened to conquer his revel fancies, he summoned Mr. Gatch to his aid.

Always he had found he could keep awake with thoughts of Mr. Gatch—who invented the (so-called bed in which he was, so to speak, resting. He wondered often who Mr. Gatch was. He could suspect his nationality—after what they had done in France and Flanders. He meant to look him up—if he ever escaped from this Gatch so-called bed—in “Who’s Who” or the Encyclopedia. He wondered if there really was a Mr. Gatch, or if he was only a sort of Mrs. Harris devised for hospital parlance; they had to call the supposititious bed by some name. Still, he could think of plenty things to call it. And he did, too, when no nurse was about. )

Whoever Gatch was, he got his deserts in having that bed named for him. And his memory will live as long as men sicken and must lie thereon. Gatch presumably meant well; he may have known why he made a couch on the lines of a sunken-garden or The Rocky Road to Dublin at Coney Island. But no patient could ever guess his reason—unless, perhaps, it was to encourage exercise for the wasted body. Yes, it was that, possibly. Gatch, maybe, saw the patient squirming out of a horse-hair valley up to a lane near the edge of the mattress: there shoving himself along to the foot-hills higher up; then, with courage in both hands and some of the sheet, set out boldly for the mountain heights on the other side of the bed. Usually, when just about to grasp the top and rest on the summit, the patient tumbles back into the valley and has to begin to make the ascent all over again. All that, in a way, is exercise: the only gymnastics or calisthenics possible in the circumstances. Gatch may have calculated on these exploring expeditions in search of rest, and designed his *soi-disant* bed accordingly.)

Must be that, or something like it, to explain the phenomenon. For Gatch, alone in all the personnel of the modern hospital, holds his own against progress. Anchored to his little so-called bed, he watches unconcerned the ceaseless march-past of science and mechanics toward the perfection of comfort for the suffering. Dour, hard, intransigent, he stands rooted in the past, not so very far from Procrustes, the

torture-couch of Torquemada, the Iron Virgin of Nuremberg and Mr. Pullman's sleeping-car.

Some day, or night more likely, Invention, daring new heights, will break a leg and—soothing thought, strangely soothing!—be forced to lie for weeks upon one of these horse-hair gargoyles. Then good-night, Mr. Gatch!

Next he hears the curtains flung wide, rattling on the pole; the blind jumps up; a glory of sun-light leaps into the room, and with it—eager, limpid, refreshing as a wood-land brook:—

“Good morning, sir! You've had a splendid night, Miss Newlands reports.”

The watch has changed; the sentry of the day takes the post, keen with news:

“You're going out to-day, sir.”

“Leave the hospital?”—incredulous.

“Out—on the porch,” Miss Savile explains; he's been elected, the chart says.

She told him further that Miss Newlands would be off duty for a night or two; had been sent home alarmingly ill; severe attack of acute indigestion.

She herself appeared to be grievously perturbed.

“That's a rather serious matter, isn't it?” Cartell sympathized.

“It would be in a student-nurse, yes sir; probably finish her! But a graduate, of course——.” The point of the dash and the toss of her head were quite lost on the dullard.

"Something she ate?" he asked inanely.

"The symptoms are commonly associated with something one has eaten." Beyond that, spoken rather acidly, the nurse would not commit herself regarding the graduate's dietetics, but added: "Miss Newlands thought it might possibly have been some bologna. But that's most unlikely; it came from Harford County."

The sterling-mark, apparently, of sausage above suspicion.

"And, besides," the patient concurred, "I had some of that for my supper."

"Yes, but it seems Miss Newlands took hers with cucumbers."

He took the same, with impunity, he explained.

"Well, then, the doctors think it must have been a doughnut."

"*A* doughnut wouldn't do it!" he protested: "I ate two."

"Three—the night-chart says. That's what decided them to let you out today—that third doughnut!"

The modern school, it would appear, holds nothing inconsiderable. Trifles light as air, imponderable as a doughnut, they compass in their calculations. And always, you will come to learn, they keep an eye on the inscrutable element of chance. . . . What had laid the nurse up—and almost out—had put the patient on his feet.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CODE OF THE PORCH CLUB

**T**HE Porch Club itself has nothing to say in the election of a new member. That lies with the house-physicians. In the chart-room, or over the midnight supper, they decide whether you are fit to go out: if so, you get in. Your social status or your financial standing, your moral character or your past conduct cuts no figure in their decision; it's only your pulse and thermometer. If they've been behaving decently, according to the nurses' records, you're elected to the Porch and remain a member for the period of your unnatural life in the hospital.

There is a sort of house-committee made up of the nurses; but like most house-committees they preferred a *laissez-faire* policy and were seldom around the Club.

The Porch sessions were for them a welcome breathing-spell of languorous idling, during which they tidied up the patients' rooms, refreshed the flowers, planned some especial delicacy for the food-trays, wrote up the charts, took telephone messages, turned away forbidden visitors, brought in the ones

permitted, paid off laundress, valets, newsman, took instructions from the doctors, smiles or scoldings from the superintendent,—all the time, of course, keeping an eye on the patients and an ear on the bell-rack, and, in between these few little duties, studying for the State Board Examinations—now only a few weeks off—and knitting silk Jerseys. Yes, the Porch Club was a boon to the blue-gingham girls: gave them their only real rest and loaf throughout the twelve hours of service from seven to seven.

There were no formal rules and regulations: but several customs that brooked no slighting—on penalty—if discovered—of the nurses' displeasure. And no man cared to incur that more than once—excepting a certain Mr. Huggins.

For a new member, always the same manner of initial entry to the Porch Club; the double-doors opened wide by an orderly, and the patient's bed trundled on by a twain of nurses. Later he might arrive by wheel-chair, and finally, toward the end of his membership, he would limp in a-foot, wearing his best clothes and a patronizing air of superiority: 'Some come-back—what?'

And invariably—this custom was adamant!—the same amiable, sympathetic greeting one to the other: "You're looking much better today!" And always, in return, the same amiable, feeble fiction: "Thanks. You are, too!" Always except in the case of Mr. Huggins. No matter how well Abner was looking



he was: "Feeling worse, darn-sight worse." And he'd call for orange-juice.

A third point of etiquette decreed to every member a place-in-the-sun. Now and then, of course—as in every Club—some member would attempt to "hog" more than his due of the violet-rays; but the right of squatter-sovereignty was never tolerated. Your own nurse saw to that!

Never, in any circumstance whatsoever—this custom transcends all others!—never may you tell a fellow-member about his "case."

You are not supposed to know anything about it. Most probably you don't.

Still, as K'ung tsze hinted timidly, 2,500 years ago, and as several persons since then have said openly and unblushingly, 'It's a small world after all'—and such things will get around, especially through visitors from the outside. But if through any device or reason you do happen to have some inside information about your neighbor's insides—*silenzio!* No matter how great the temptation. He may assure you, in all kindness, that you're done for—that they've given you up—that your room has already been promised to another party—yet you must not return the compliment even though you know, on authority, that it's coming to him, and sooner than he thinks for.

They don't stop you from talking of your own case. They couldn't! Nothing on earth could unless your case were lock-jaw or tonsil-removal or

something similar that physically and mechanically made it impossible to talk. And then you'd write it, or tell it in sign-language or pantomime.

And, finally, smokers must not flick ashes from cigars or pipes on the club-floor!

Where then?

What do you have pockets for, in your pajamas or lounge-robe?—Not on the floor, anyway! The nurses would have to clear them up; and each had a way of her own to discourage infractions of the rule. Miss Killarney, for instance, might say nothing, but she'd look volumes, and every glance of her blue eyes went out with a fiery brogue. You may not know what that means: but the offender did. Miss Condé would gently replace the unruly cigar with a thermometer, as though to say: "There, sir! Flick your ashes from *that*, if you can!" The offender knew *her* meaning, too.

As for the rest, the Porch conforms, by common consent, to the code of clubs in general. During his many, many weeks of membership, Cartell never saw any gambling, not even in the most exciting games of solitaire. Nor any excessive drinking—except in the case of Mr. Huggins—although the hospital caves could boast château vintages of sarsaparilla, ginger-ale, barley-water and lemon-pop. Huggins might go too far now and then, with orange-juice, but he was of the old school that carried liquor well. And, anyway, Huggins was hope-

less—a law unto himself, after the fashion of the very rich.

As time brought convalescence, the Porch Club grew in numbers and in liveliness. The sessions ceased from whispers; became symposiums of symptoms, olympiads of operations. There were boastful rivalries of pains: challenges of desperate resorts: claims for the palm in endurance-tests. They spoke the language of contesting athletes, and strained for supremacy like Marathon-runners.

Curious, though, the tragic cases—the really serious members of the body—spoke little and rather fearsomely. The loudest, most confident talk came from the appendix or tonsil, or some other merely ornamental member.

Cartell made one of a strangely assorted company, thrown together by the tricks of mischance. . . . A famous soldier, who had come scot-free through storms of shrapnel, machine-gun bullets, gas-filled trenches, only to be laid low now by a self-willed grape-seed in the appendix. . . . A little boy, heir to millions, watched and guarded by valets, grooms and governess, abominably hurt by a fall from his rocking-horse. . . . A mining engineer, whose skill had driven deadly fumes from the bowels of the earth, got into his own a whiff of sewer-gas from the marble bath of a modish hotel. . . . An iron-moulder, who toyed for years with cauldrons of molten metal amid a wilderness of flying fires, lies

nearly finished by the infectious flare of a safety-match. . . .

And, in gorgeous salience, dominant of all the scene, the old-rose kimono and a bud-encircled boudoir-cap above a face now masked by a silvery veil; a year or so ago, the cynosure of capitals: the most talked-of belle at a Court-presentation.

Helleu did her portrait in pastel. You've seen it, copied faintly, in Sunday-Supplements. You've read her splendours rhapsodized in magazines: "If Sargent doesn't paint her in all the fickle moods and phases of her beauty, he misses such chance as Romney found in Emma Hart. . . . Only Zuloaga or Sorolla could have caught and caged her color—the pink of pomegranate beneath old-ivory white."

Less than a year ago. And now, shrinking behind the veil, a face seared and scarred, discoloured as though in flame and beyond repair—by no more than a thimbleful of tainted complexion cream!—compounded from the favorite prescription—lately unearthed—of Ninon de L' Enclos. Or was it Cleopatra's? Or Marilyn Miller's? The advertisements vary.

But only skin-deep, the hurt. They'd restore her beauty—these magic-workers. She knew that, surely. Else she couldn't be chatting so light-heartedly with the Contessa Tulsa Bianchi, a woman of beauty almost as famous as her own. You might as easily imagine the Venus-de-Milo kidding with Phryne or some other possible rival, if she weren't

perfectly sure that, some day, she'd get back her arms.

Such faith as Venus had in Phidias and the marbles of Carrara, the Veiled Lady had in the doctors and the magics of B. M. H. But for that she would have died—she confessed to Kevan Varrey, the one man in the Club with whom she spoke, always, quite at ease. Told it, first, on a day when the world looked terrifyingly black to the painter, and told it in a tone so eager with encouragement—not for herself but him—that, intensely curious, he made to lift the bandage from his blinded eyes. A nurse crossed to him swiftly, seized his hand, with a peremptory—"Careful, sir!" 'Yes, of course; he'd forgotten for the moment'—that his single chance of future light lay in present darkness.

A widow, the Contessa Bianchi, twice over: and both times widowed—by the grace of American Courts—of foreign husbands, with which, she assured Miss Trenholme, her nurse, she was now thoroughly fed up.

In the last instance her lawyers had petitioned that she be restored to the Miss of maidenhood. But this privilege the Court had curtly denied, explaining subsequently in private to her counsel that the male portion of the community were entitled to *some* protection!

She had traveled several thousands of miles in quest of this little hospital—or, rather, the great

surgeon whose fame rang through Europe by reason of his achievements in the camp hospitals.

Hurrying pell-mell from San Sebastian—where false rumor engaged her to an Albanian grandee—she had stopped only at Monte Carlo to see if she were *en veine* for the surgical ordeal, and in Paris for the sort of negligées one ought to wear in a hospital. And she wore them, too—a different one almost every day that she lit up the Porch by her gala presence.

“Go abroad,” she seriously advised a group of nurses, “for your hats and gowns and fluffy *laissez-faires*, but get your husbands, your divorces and your operations here at home. I’ve tried all three on the other side. No good! Over here a woman is everything to one man; over there she’s the same thing to all men. . . . They make you tired. Look at Artemisia’s—her operation, I mean. They all took a hack at it—Athens, Rome, Paris, London. Regular royal progress. And in the end she’ll have to come home for it. Just as I did.”

She was equally averse to the foreign nurses.<sup>1</sup> In her own particular experience: “The young ones took my lingerie and the old ones took snuff.” Then,

<sup>1</sup>“There is no nursing worthy of the name in Europe, outside the countries of North Europe, and Britain. The American nurse and her methods are successful because she has back of her generations of women trained in the discipline of liberty. That gives her initiative, resource and balance. . . . English nursing-schools are still modelled after the monasteries and church communities of the Middle Ages.”—*Alice Fitzgerald, Director of the Department of Nursing of the League of Red Cross Societies.*

apropos of nothing actually on view, but by some association of ideas, she babbled of baths:

“That’s the real trouble over there. ’Tisn’t their blood-feuds, nor their trade-rivalries nor their boundaries; it’s simply baths—that they never take. They’re always getting into hot water because they never *do* get in it. If the United States ever joins a League of Nations it should make a necessary condition that every commune in every State in Europe should set-up at least one real bath-tub with real running water, and that every person, regardless of age, sex or social position, should use it at least once every so often. You’d see how they’d quiet down over there!”

To the continental rarity of what is here a commonplace, she accredited a long-regnant school of painting: the callipygian Dianas, Daphnes and Danaës, all surprised *au-bain*, shame-faced as though caught at some sybarite shindig, and all splashing from that art-spirit which exploits the exotic, exceptional, startling. “Year after year,” she exclaimed, “they make a Salon sensation with what here is left to the soap-advertisement.

“And the idea of sending over nice, sweet girls like you, and brilliant young doctors, to scrape and curry entire nations who are always bragging of their arts and poetry, their ancient civilizations, noble traditions, heroic aspirations, but never learned the meaning of soap and shampoos.”

Despite her long residence in Europe and her

foreign husbands, the Contessa spoke her native American with scarcely a touch of outlandish accent. This she attributed to the fact that the formative years of her life—the first sixteen or seventeen—had passed in Oklahoma—Muskogee.—“And you never get quite away from that sort of thing,” she explained with candid pride, “no matter how far you go.” And she had gone far: she was proud of that, too.

“Two titles clinched, and a third one left on the hooks—not bad, *mes amies*, for Muskogee!”

The Albanian title, she added, was the choicest of all—“though the first two weren’t phoney, by a long shot”—and the most exciting: “One foot on the throne, one in the grave, and up to his ears in debt.” This last might have been arranged easily enough—“You could pay off their national debt with one of Pa’s ‘gushers’”;—but there was a morganatic joker in it somewhere, and she shied at that. She never could understand precisely what the morganatic meant but she didn’t like the idea: “Sounded a little too Mormon” for her.

Besides, if she did marry again—but nothing on earth could tempt her after what she’d seen of them here!—“Look at them, Trenny,” she appealed to the nurse: “Unshaved—straggle-haired—brows touselled—sloppy slippers—those horrible bath-ropes—boney, scraggy—and the color of them—ugh! ‘Dreadfully ill.’—Yes, but they don’t have to look like that! The women-patients don’t.”



No—not to the naked eye. And but hardly to the crystal vision of the savant. Note the confusion and puzzlement of young Tantree and the younger Fenway as they pause at the chaise-longue. For to that grace the occupant transforms the clumsy wheelchair. So, too, does the Contessa; all the women patients. Even to the Gatch-bed—grim, ungainly, ghastly—they give, somehow, the complexion of the boudoir, the coquetry of the petit-lever.

Only three days, four at most—the surgeons marvel—since they assisted at the radical alterations, practically a reconstruction. Even now much of the scaffolding still up: temporary beams and girders still in place: deep marks of the dismantling that only time can iron out. But no sign of disturbance, not the slightest flaw, in the façade! Cheeks a-bloom, lips a-glow, eyes a-light. Coiffure marcelled to the permanence and precision of sculptor's marble—not the tiniest tress astray above the falling collar of the negligée. The hand, proffered for the ceremonial of the "pulse," orrised and pinked *au bout des ongles*. Every detail of appearance and attire—down to the tips of the Louis Seize pumps—formal, trim, correct, alluring. "Business going on as usual, during alterations." That always takes skill and care—and sometimes a false front.

Nor waits on convalescence, this elegance. They bring it with them. Arrive always, unless already reduced to unconsciousness, in best bib and tucker,

and often with French maid and wardrobe-trunk lodged nearby. Even the lowly, of the public-ward, comes bedecked "as the bride adorneth herself with jewels," alert, no less than her sister of the Porch, to that spiritual support which high authority attaches to fine raiment even above religion.

But the male patient—you heard the Contessa's contrast!

Considering the ancientness<sup>1</sup> of hospitals, their masculine origin and ordering, the numbers of him that every hour of every day are sent there, his neglect of the amenities of the occasion is peculiarly significant. He appears, generally, to have been hustled off in 'any old thing.' 'Doesn't really matter' they tell him—his women-folk—and fetch from the attic moth-chest the suit he had meant to go to Armenia or to go fishing. Lucky, indeed, if they overlook that Prince Albert that he's been keeping against his old age or a possible recrudescence of the model. . . . Later when comes the peevishness that ushers convalescence, it occurs to him that the Prince Albert had been reserved with deliberate thrift—"in case anything happened"—euphemism for the one remaining social function in which a Prince Albert passes unjeered. . . . *En passant*, more than one sudden codicil, rich in disappoint-

<sup>1</sup>The Surat hospital, in Hindustan, has been in continuous use for twenty-two centuries. Aesculapius was house-physician of the one at Cos. Long before that—4000 B.C.—Heliopolis was the very Baltimore of its day in the matter of hospitals. *Vide* the Ebers Papyrus.

ment, has emerged from a ripped seam, and some blasted hopes from missing buttons.

And there—in the sunniest patch of the Porch—absorbed in *The Financial Chronicle* while absorbing orange-juice—Mr. Huggins. The most exacting patient in the hospital: domineering, captious, autocratic. So that he figured in the mind of his nurse—the Bishop's daughter—and occasionally in her speech—as the Grand Mogul.

He was reputed rich—beyond any other man in Anne Arundel County: he didn't look rich, as little as does the richest man in the world.

Even less did the look of him betray his politics: a radical, violent radical. Not a socialist—he had not yet reached that point of revolt against the existing order; but merely an anarchist, opposed to all laws that touched his estate or hampered his financial activities. That's what the war had made of Mr. Huggins; or, rather, its sequelæ: The unfamiliar woes put on wealth by the holocaust had transformed a conservative country banker, with a private wire to Wall Street, into a figure that would cheer Bryant Park or Trafalgar Square, if the police didn't interfere. Lacking other audience he would turn upon his nurse, Miss Condé:

“Do you know what I think of the income tax?”

She knew well enough but would answer:

“No, sir.”

“The infamy of the ages!”

“Really, sir?”

“The precursor of the collapse of the Republic,” and he threw it straight at the helpless young woman as though holding her personally responsible for the whole unhappy business.

On one occasion he embarrassed her to a blush, by asking in a voice loud enough to turn every eye toward their corner of the porch:

“How would you like to share an income of a hundred thousand a year——”

(‘Good Lord,’—a public proposal!)

“—with the Government? Have ’em take half of it from you? Wouldn’t like that, would you?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What!”

“Well, I mean, sir, seeing what’s left I wouldn’t much mind their half. But you mustn’t worry about such things. You are to think only of getting well, Dr. Kreweson says—and out of here.”

They missed no chance to remind him of that.

At times he’d pick on some convalescent, still too weak for defence or flight, and rail at the entire philosophy of modern economics as applied to wealth. He grew especially eloquent against the theory that the enormously rich should pay more for medical service than the extremely poor. There the radical’s hatred of class distinction came up strong. Huggins argued that when a great surgeon gave his skill for nothing to a poor man and then made up for it by his charge for similar service to

the rich patient the former was in danger of being "pauperized." He had fervid fear of any device of so-called charity that threatened the dignity of poverty and, incidentally, the tax rate.

His wealth, though of national renown, was his least distinction in the hospital. There was, for one thing, his appetite. That was not only voracious: it was vociferous; loudly demanding his meals on the clock-stroke: snacks between times, with orange-juice to wash them down: and long after midnight he would send a tired, worn-out nurse in quest of sandwiches, cakes, or puddings,—and more orange-juice—always orange-juice. He consumed orange-juice—goblet after goblet—as though the hospital's endowment included half the citrus groves of Florida, Jamaica and Spain.

Every room had, of course, an electric-call, and on the table, by the bed, a small hand-bell. But Mr. Huggins was taking no chances with delicate mechanisms or alarms that merely tinkled. He had brought from home, and kept constantly within reach, a large brass bell; the sort the village-auctioneer employs to gather a crowd, or the farmer's wife to call the help to dinner. Of course, he never used it: but its presence gave him a sense of security.

But what marked Huggins beyond all else was his drawn-out sojourn in the hospital: his persistence in staying on long after his complete recovery: his flat refusal to notice hint, intimation or innuendo.

He got them a-plenty, from the physicians, surgeons, internes and even the superintendent, the masterful Miss Beaux. But—no go! Not in his condition! He'd leave it to the nurse. "You'll take *her* word, won't you?—Bishop's daughter!"

"I suppose you know best, sir, how you feel but——"

"Certainly!"

"And, in any event, sir, we're not supposed to argue with our patient."

"Quite so! I knew you'd agree with me." And he stayed on.

Somehow the notion came—by jest out of puzzle—that Huggins was in—no, impossible!—too ridiculous!—well, then, he'd taken an abiding fancy for some one and meant to abide there with it.

No one except the cook ever ventured to guess the particular object of his silent, stubborn devotion; and she guessed the orange-crate.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FACETIATION OF A MAJOR OPERATION

**I**T was through Varrey, the painter, that Cartell came to know Bodley Kricke.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Kricke was a convalescent-emeritus, so to speak: "discharged as cured"—some time ago, but revisiting the hospital occasionally for "observation." Thus he retained his Club privileges and opportunity to impart to the members—in strictest confidence—that he was paying Varrey's bills: "One of *our* young men," he described him: "doing great work, too, till his eyes got tired—from lookin' at the gals, I tell him," he guffawed. "'Over-work' these doctors say. But none of that in our plant—is there, Varrey? Rest-rooms for every department from binders to artists."

When neither of his hearers commented on the already widely-advertised altruism of the Kricke Publishing Company, he reverted to his original humour: "Still, if you've got to lose your sight, you couldn't ask a pleasanter way, could you?"

<sup>1</sup>The name is a household-word in some sections of the country, by reason of Kricke's comprehensive compilation, in three volumes, entitled: "How to Beat the Doctor to It."

Bodley Kricke boasted a natural flair of the general's favor; knew what the public would buy. He had published "The Secret Amours" of every court in Europe with a success equalled only by his "Beauties of the Bible"—the "beauties" ranging through all the ages from Genesis to Revelations and on to Apocrypha. Here you might see, perhaps for the first time, convincing portraits of Eve, Sheba's queen, Salome, Jezebel, Judith and Susanna—she of the bath and Peeping Toms—to say nothing of such lesser lights as Cain's wife and Ashtoreth and many of the "strange women," unnamed but piquante; all "in three colors and suitable for framing," and all looking exactly alike—as though the artist, in poverty or love, had done them from one model.<sup>1</sup> With each portrait went a complete biographical sketch, of meticulous detail. Lord only knows where the author got the facts.

"Written anything lately?" he plumped at Cartell.

"My last will just before I came here."

"I mean something to sell, not give away."

"I'm afraid my will will prove a 'sell,' after the bills here are paid."

"That's just what I was thinking. Get busy. There's a book in this place. I saw that the moment I came out of the ether. Something doing here."

"It's been done, a dozen times."

<sup>1</sup>The artist's "originals" were subsequently acquired for the decoration of an eminently chic hotel at Atlantic City. The local Baedeker "stars" the collection.



"Yes, but never done right. These nurses, for one thing. They've never been written about as they really are. There's a group of them out there on the nurses' bench.—Like a row of Dutch dolls in their blue-gingham. I've been looking them over, and catching their conny-shonie. . . . I've read a lot of hospital books, printed two or three myself. But I see now what a bad job they made of it. Not one caught the humor. It was either gush or a grouch; sickly sentiment or morbid introspection. What I want is—is—well, the human-comedy," he floundered—"the mirror-up-to-nature stuff—nature in the buff."

"You can get it in the raw—in several books: some famous."

"But not funny!"

Excruciatingly funny—two or three of them, Cartell protested. They're dosed out to a patient by the nurses, regularly, along with his first solid food. And if he doesn't shake with laughter over the vraisemblant account of the horrors he himself has just gone through—shake with care, of course, so as not to split the stitches—they take his temperature. Something going wrong with the case, somewhere. They had taken his, he confessed to Kricke. He had quite missed the gayeties of a major operation.

"Where's your sense of humor, man? Varrey said you have one. What's become of it?"

"I don't know. Ask the nurse. She may know

what the surgeons did with it. I'm perfectly certain I haven't it—the slightest vestige of it—in any part of my anatomy. So if you're looking for a funny book on the subject—Get the author of your 'Bible Beauties!' Nothing could be funnier than that."

Yes, Kricke assented, if he'd had the luck to go through what Cartell did. "But no imagination; he can only write facts."

"Then why not do it yourself, Mr. Kricke? With your actual experience here and your teeming sense of the comic, you're the 'indicated' dose in the case."

"Family objections," Kricke confided. He wanted to; had it all mapped out: a ouija-work dictated by Mark Twain and Josh Billings, with a dash of old Hostetter, the almanac humorist. . . . "But the wife—well, you know, women are sort of prejudiced on that particular subject. Mrs. Kricke thinks the only funny thing about nurses is their men-patients and the fools they make of themselves."

Through the veiled allusion showed the age-old story, all the clearer for Kricke's abstracted self-survey in the mirror, smoothing his sparse locks, perking his Irish-poplin tie, shooting his cuffs.

"On every other point," he resumed loyally, "my wife has the mind of Justinian, only no sense of the ridiculous. Says that's how she came to marry me—so she could share mine. And she's been a big, intellectual force in my publications—'specially in

the cafeteria and rest-room, and advising our girls against squandering their incomes on fashionable follies and idle display. Left to themselves, most of those bindery kids would be dressing like Mrs. Astor on their nine dollars a week.—Nevertheless”, he shouted, suddenly noting his hearer’s deep breaths and drooping eyelids, “I believe there is a way of doing the book that won’t offend my wife. I didn’t intend, myself, to make it *all* hilarious, and I wouldn’t demand it of you.”

“No?” yawned the patient: “that’s certainly a comfort.”

Kricke took heart. “A little high-brow won’t hurt. People rather expect it from my authors; something about Schopenhauer, Tolstoi and Sneetchy——”

“Nietzsche?” he suggested.

“Yes, and Bergson and that nasty Freud stuff”: he served it ‘fried.’

“You think that’s effective?”

“Sure-fire! Look at Wassili Gaubengovitch—‘Greatest American Realist,’ I advertise him; made his reputation—and keeps it—just by that sort of thing; and ringing in now and then ‘*Also sprach Zarathushtra*’—if you get me.”

“Quite. You pronounce it perfectly.”

“Ought to. I’ve printed it in every one of Gaubengovitch’s books.”

His kindly plan, he urged, considered Varrey, too; he’d illustrate the book. And since Cartell missed

the humour of the subject, Varrey could insinuate the fun in the pictures—"way H. G. Wells did in his 'Outline of History.' " <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Kricke expatiated on this singular view of an epochal work; appeared to believe sincerely that the Noah's Ark and Little Rollo illuminations of Wells' text were cunning devices to beguile the reader from a too serious consideration of the author's deductions.

"But suppose that I—I—well, that anything happened—and I didn't finish the job?"

"I'll have it finished for you! Don't you worry about that—so long as *I* don't worry."

And he didn't. In fact he saw possibilities in case anything did happen—advertising possibilities. He had proved the device, in one or two instances when nothing did happen really—and got away with it. Why, he argued to Cartell, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" was left unfinished purposely, by arrangement between Dickens and his publisher, in order to enhance the mystery of the book, and its sales. And he promised similar results in this instance, 'if anything happened.'

The prospect enthused him:

"Now, get busy! I'll send up Miss Drizzle, my best stenographer—a peach; homely as an old flivver, but a quick 'pick-up' and *very* sympathetic!

<sup>1</sup> An instance of Kricke's lively flair? . . . Despite the immensely droll, and often slapstick, illustrations, the humorous quality of Mr. Wells' historical analogies and political philosophy is only now seeping into the general ken.

Always giggles at a good line. Now go to it! And make it funny—funny—as—hell!”

“Go to hell yourself, Kricke, with your giggling stenographer,” Cartell suggested sociably. “Have her make notes of the gayeties and jollities you find there, and any one can weave them into a best-seller. You see, I’ve just come from there, after a long stay, and with every shred of flesh singed off my bones, and I got back only by the grace of God and the genius of man, and I see nothing funny in either of them.”

Miss Savile, at the door, reminded the patient—while looking straight at the caller—that it was time for his nap.

Kricke remarked the blue-gingham. “Student-nurse, eh? How long have you had her?”

“From the beginning.”

“Plain, then, your case was a sure thing from the start. Nothing serious at all, or absolutely hopeless. Or they wouldn’t have put that kid in charge. Why, I don’t believe she weighs——”

“What’s her weight to do with it?” Cartell demurred wearily. “She doesn’t have to hold me down—or sit on me. I’m not crazy—as yet!” he added, uselessly.

“No, but anything can happen—after all the ether you had. And suppose you took a notion, suddenly, to jump out of that window?”

Cartell thought he’d enjoy it—just now.

The man’s scrubby humour nettled him to angry

protest: "Miss Savile graduates in a few weeks. She's preparing now for the examinations. They're extremely severe. She's had three years of experience with almost every kind of patient, but probably required just this sort of case to complete her training. That's why they put her in charge—to finish her off."

Kricke wagged his head in mock pity:

"And—you—don't—think—that's—funny? 'To finish her off?' And incidentally *you* too!" He shouted his relish of his own humour. "Well, at the worst, old man, they've provided a pleasant finish for you."

"Don't count on that too confidently," Cartell warned him. "They make it a sweet world—those 'Dutch dolls' you spoke of; a world of tenderness, sympathy, loveliness. And a man wills his very damnedest not to leave it. Longs, fights and prays—pagan though he be—that he may live to prove somehow, somewhere, sometime, his gratitude and adoration."

Kricke heard him through with an ever-widening grin of self-complacence:

"Just as I said. It's either grouch or gush."

Kricke's hilarity had been so easy and, apparently, sincere that Cartell struggled to reach his view-point. It irked him that he should miss elements of humour obvious even to the creator of "Beauties from the Bible." And yet, try as he would, he could see noth-

ing funny in the place—except, possibly, himself—*his* being here. . . . A man who believed implicitly in mental-therapy; who “threw off” every suggestion of malaise. He had not, perhaps, attained the plane of faith that any seeming ailment could be routed by a determined Tush-tush! and a couple of Boo’s! Yet he had always been able to convince himself that he was in perfect health—except, possibly, for too much tobacco and too little exercise. Then, suddenly, to wake up here—a hundred-to-one chance, if luck’s with him and the going’s good—yes, that might be funny!

And the humour held, even against the dulciloquies of Adepts—who could look upon features pinched and wizened to a dried lemon, pipe-stem wrists, deep-sunken eyes, the bulge of the surgeon’s plumbing beneath blanket-robos of patterns reserved exclusively for hospital and prize-ring—and yet: “There’s been nothing wrong, really. To think so is Error.”. . . Flawless philosophy and of proved profit; but needs, somehow, much fellowship of the faith: close communion of kindred credence. Phrase and persuasion once clear as noon to Cartell he heard now dazed and listless. Taking more peace and courage—though his every superstition resented—from the message of candles lighted for his safety and from a tiny vial of holy-water sent to him by his shoemaker.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WAY OF A MAID WITH A FAHRENHEIT

ONE day, after a session of the Porch Club, Cartell sat gloomily over the luncheon-tray, staring into space.

“Stop thinking, sir!”

He seemed not to hear.

So then, more sharply: “Eat your luncheon.”

He shook his head.

“Why not?” Miss Savile demanded. “Isn’t the tray attractive?”

“I’m not hungry,” he answered querulously.

“That cold-consommé—you don’t have to be hungry for that; comes from Somerset County—the chicken did,” she persisted, till he took a spoonful and set the cup aside.

“No, you must finish that, sir,” and she replaced the cup.

“I’ve had quite enough.—Hand me a cigar, please.”

“Indeed you’ll not smoke, sir, till you’ve eaten your luncheon.”

“Not today,” he begged. “Don’t insist, please.”



"I must, sir, or know what's wrong. The doctors will ask when they see the chart: 'No lunch?' I can't say, simply, you were peevish or grouchy or disagreeable—not the least like your usual self. Come, now," she coaxed, "what is it?"

"O, a cheery little nothing I heard out there, on the porch—from a Mr. Gribbles."

"Yes, Miss Killarney's patient. I saw him whispering to you—as though it were very important."

"No! Mere bagatelle! Only told me I'm done for! Couldn't get well. He got that in confidence from a friend of his who visits here. His friend got it from some one outside, some one who knows. Thought I ought to be told—to put my affairs straight—and my soul."

For an instant the nurse was too dumbfounded to speak: turned away lest he should see her dismay. Then, with a burst of laughter:

"Did he tell *you* that, too? He does the same with every patient he meets. But most of them have guessed the truth. I supposed you all did. . . . The poor thing is crazy—mad as a hatter," she rattled on while the patient finished the consommé—"though I don't see what a hatter has to get mad about, seeing the prices he gets now-a-days for a whiff of straw and a feather!—Now the chops, please—and both potatoes.—By rights, of course, that man should be in the psychopathic ward and kept there. But they're trying some new out-door system of treating idiocy—something to do with

violet-rays. We all can see how it works in his case: he's getting crazier every minute.—Yes, I thought you'd like that salad-dressing.—He keeps us on tenter-hooks every second he's on the porch, lest he jump over the rail. Of course, I've no business to tell you all this, but you'd have worried, naturally, if you didn't know the truth about the—the—poor fish.—You're going to have some for dinner—Norfolk spots—from Princess Anne County: caught this morning. They look most attractive.—And isn't Miss Killarney lucky to get a case like that? Extremely rare you know; the first I've ever seen here—and the strawberries, too"—she uncovered the fruit-dish—"the very first of the season—and he's so hopelessly, incurably morbid."

"Didn't speak so to me," Cartell objected. "Seemed disgustingly cheerful."

"Yes, so he is—about his own condition. It's only about other persons that he worries. That's the peculiar feature of the case—the abnormal altruism. It's what they call, I believe, eh—eh—hetero-hypochondriasis."

She made-up the nonce-word as airily as Mr. Holmes fitted "anæsthesia" to the haloed tooth-pull.

"After that," she said, indicating the emptied tray, "I think you may have one of the large cigars." Held the match to the Corona-Corona: saw, delighted, the blues go up in smoke: then flew to the

superintendent's office. There she confessed to Miss Beaux with more anger than regret how she had lied—"horribly"—about Miss Killarney's patient. Simply *had* to do it, she explained: "I know, of course, it was utterly wrong——"

"Yes, my dear," Miss Beaux agreed; "a lie is always wrong, never justified. And you've broken one of the most important rules—discussed another nurse's patient. Might cost you your license, if the State Board learned of it. They wouldn't allow you to graduate."

Whereupon Miss Savile's mouth twitched and her eyes blinked and her shoulders drooped in threat of a faint.

"Besides violating a rule of the hospital, you've outraged the laws of philology. There's no such combination possible as hetero and—and—what you said. Still your first consideration," Miss Beaux continued, "possibly your highest duty is to your own patient. We'll let it go at that, child; and, perhaps, your case didn't really believe what you told him."

"O, but he did, ma'am! Ate up every word of it—and his lunch, too. Had barely touched it before."

"Then you must have l—— done it very well, indeed. And there's really nothing more to worry about. Mr. Gribbles is leaving tomorrow: 'discharged as cured.'"

"Not *really* cured?" Her tone arraigned the Avenging Angels.

"Well—er—sufficiently for domestic requirements. His wife is going to nurse him."

"Serves him right!"

"Perhaps so. But we need the room. And after what the man did we must be charitable and assume that he is, at least, half-crazy. Later on, if Mr. Cartell recovers, you can confess the slight exaggeration."

"Yes, of course," Sandra exclaimed eagerly, "I'll tell him it was found that the man was not crazy, but only an abnormally low, mean, brutish order of intelligence."

To Gribbles' offending she gave weight and wrath in curious degree. Frequent enough, its like, to keep them always watchful of it. Too often they've seen a patient won gradually from monsters of despair, only to be laid low by some sudden, miserable maggot of a word, bred not always of carelessness or stupidity or tactlessness, but rather of malice, cunning, sheer deviltry. There's a long story in "Stop thinking, sir."

And it does the work; the sick wits obey. In health the mind would react militant against the naïve device: think all the harder. Now it swerves from its obsession at the first flick of the phrase—quite as a flirt of the matador's blanket diverts the single-minded bull. Mentally you are now, in very truth, 'brother-to-the-ox.'

The next day Cartell, missing the mad-man from his wonted sun-spot on the Porch, asked Miss Savile if he had jumped off, or something. No, she regretted to say, but the doctors had decided they could do nothing more for him—which was quite true; “And his friends have taken him away.”

After some moments of silence Cartell asked abruptly, as though from the book he was reading:

“Do you think a lie is ever justified?”

“Certainly not!”—She flamed at the mere suggestion.

“In no conceivable circumstance?”

“No, sir!”—most emphatic.

“And a nurse wouldn’t——?”

“Never!”

“Not even if prevarication were indicated as a prophylactic in the case?”

“I’ve never heard of such a case!”

“Gribbles?”

“O, stop think——!”

“What did you say ails him?”

She had to rummage for a moment before she found it: “Hetero-hypochondriasis.—Why—do you question——?”

“No!—I’ve caught it.”

“Caught *what?*”

“That Greek disturbance.”

“You couldn’t possibly, sir. You haven’t the first symptom.”

“No, but the last.—Close the window, please—

and lock it. Yes, Miss Savile, I find I'm worrying—morbidly—not about myself, but—some one else.”

“No harm in that, sir, so long as you don't tell them. Just keep it to yourself and—your mouth shut, please. Three minutes.”

What these girls couldn't do with a thermometer! Taking temperature was the least. In their hands that tiny thread of glass served purposes as varied, effective, fantastic as the lace fan of a Florentine belle. Many a cry of pain has been hushed to a whimper by it. Many an outburst of temper silenced. And some sentimental avowals, too! O, yes, that's been known to happen—in a hospital. Romance sticks a rose to her nose, and laughs at chloroform. Seems to like the place—haunts it—for the surprise and novelty—like fashion on a lark to the Night-Court and the Morgue in the sight-seeing bus. Or comes to show what she can do—here—where you'd least expect it. What gorgeous fancies she can weave from shabby, faded material. Takes the tag-rag from Nature's ash-can and with a pass of the hand—presto!—life a-new and its best enchantments.

But imagine a man trying to make a marriage-proposal, or only hinting a nascent fondness, or the mere affection of gratitude—which is all Cartell had in mind—with a thermometer stuck half-way down his throat and the creature of his fancy ordering him to shut his mouth—and keep it shut, three

minutes! It can't be done! It has been tried, by godless men and good, by bold, desperate men in the first flush of recovering, and it can't be done!

Miss Newlands went on duty that night, fully informed of Miss Savile's desperate excursion into cerebrology: the invention there of a new disorder for Mr. Gribbles and the purpose thereof. The name of it, too, she had repeated until it came trippingly from the tongue. So that if the patient, still doubting, should recur to the subject—as he had done today—Miss Newlands might not be taken off guard at any point.

The attack came over the supper-tray:

“Have you had any experience with crazy men?”

“A little, sir. And they, perhaps, were only half-crazy. Most men are, you know, Dr. Switcher says.”

“Did you ever have a case of hetero-hypochon——?”

“Not of my own, no, sir.” She intoned it as though lamenting a personal calamity—a precious professional privilege of which she had been deprived unfairly.

“Then there really is such a thing as——?”

“Oh, yes, indeed, sir! We've had a case of it here, only recently.”

“Miss Killarney's patient—Gribbles?”

“So he called himself, yes, sir. But they found he'd really forgotten his right name. A beautiful

case—so definite! Miss Killarney's writing a monograph of it for the *Medical Record*."

No half-way methods for Miss Newlands. And the ghost lay until morning.

Cartell woke in a room still darkened save for light sieving through the scrim curtains. The night-nurse stood at the foot of the bed, silent, motionless, in a stare of apparent anxiety. Never before had he wakened at this hour to find her here. Always, as if by rule, the day-nurse. Such sharp variance of routine must mean something!—"Gribbles, of course!" After long obedience to custom change is suspect to the sick. He thought at once of Gribbles. After all, then, he wasn't crazy—damn him!—

"Anything gone wrong, Miss Newlands?"

"Nothing at all, sir"—she parted the curtains slightly—"I just looked in to make sure."

Thanks—fervently—yes, he'd had a splendid night.

"Nothing disturbed you?"

"No—until a moment since. I imagined I heard Gr—groans or shouting across the hall. Guess that woke me."

"I was afraid it might, sir, and that you wouldn't understand. That's why I sneaked in. But you didn't *imagine* the shout. It was real enough—to bring us all running."—She could hardly tell it now for laughing.—"Miss Gwinett's patient—the little jockey—Mr. Skethway—in a night-mare. Sitting



up in bed—yelling, top of his voice: ‘Come on, Nurse! Come on!’ Says he saw Miss Gwinett riding in his stead at Pimlico. He couldn’t make out the horse, but Gwin wore the sweater he’s seen her working on—Black, white cuffs and collar. Mr. Skethway vows it’s a ‘hunch from heaven’ and we all must play it—the colors. I’m going down to the track, with a party of the night nurses. We’re starting right after breakfast, to make sure of good seats—and odds. I thought, sir, you might want to put something on the horse—unless we see it’s a regular cow and a hopeless stable.”

“Even so——”

“That’s what I say, sir.—Bother the stable. Play the sweater.”

That night, the racing-party getting back just in time to go on duty and miss their supper, there was much ice cream of divers flavors, éclairs, cream-puffs, ginger-ale and—altogether a very jolly party for a hospital. . . . In the third race at Pimlico Miss Gwinett’s mount, freed from the burden of stable money, had loafed like the cow he looked for seven furlongs. Then something happened—heaven knows what!—and the sweater stretched into first money—to the stable’s disgust and in spite of the jockey’s best efforts to follow instructions. . . . Some very peculiar horses at Pimlico.

The episode made a deep impression on Cartell. Perhaps, after all, Kricke was right. 'No one has ever described them as they really are.' . . . Still, it wouldn't be easy—to write of 'saints' who were such good-lookers, good dancers, good sports.

Franklin Lane had it in mind to do. In that last letter to his friends scrawled hurriedly in his brief villegiature from death he wrote: "Never before have I been called upon deliberately to walk into the valley of the shadow, and, say what you will, it is a great act. . . . A man with a little curiosity, a little humor, a little money, and not too much pain, could enjoy himself studying the ways of doctors and nurses as he journeyed along the invalid's path."

So with almost every man who sojourns for a while in that strange companionship; comes the will and resolve to acclaim—somehow—the undreamed wonder of it. Begun in the ether's twilight, complete twixt sun and sun: days, weeks and months of closest communion—and then, mostly, undone and over with as though it were but another trick of the drug.

The impulse to record finds divers expression. Henley turned to jerky jingles: grateful but hepatic. Some, strange with letters, ease the urge through a hoop of gold. Thus, lately, Doria-Pamphili, heir of the Cæsars, flouts half the royal purple of Europe

for some yards of witchery in white duck.<sup>1</sup> Another puts his hosannas in a will; writes of "gratitude to science," "debt to humanity," but—dux femina facti! What the world takes for a philanthropic Foundation is, really, a sort of posthumous flirtation. And many a hospital wing, if the truth were known, is no more than a feather in some nurse's cap.

<sup>1</sup>The motif of the story of the Italian Prince who married his trained nurse is nothing new. But the incident opens the way to a vast and hitherto untilled field of speculation. How can a woman, frail creature that she is, muster courage to marry a man she has nursed through a period of illness?—"*On Second Thought*," by Jay E. House.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BLUE-GINGHAM TRAGEDY

**M**R. KRICKE vantaged his next visit to the hospital to discover by ingenious inquiry the "prospects" of Number Seventy-three. The scant information he gleaned was disturbing; affected him so patently that, despite Miss Savile's frowns and signals, Dr. Kreweson said, yes, he might see the patient: "very few minutes and very little talk." So Kricke went to the point at once:

"Have you started the book?"

No. He hadn't even thought about it.

"Good! I've been thinking it over. Funny books aren't selling. Too much humor, cheap, in the newspapers and movies. . . . We'll make this thing sensational!"

Cartell groaned inwardly, but it showed in his face.

Kricke rushed to encourage:

"We've started our publicity campaign. Press-notices about your being here—point-of-death—and that personal sort of thing.—How we've arranged for the right man to finish the work in case you—well, if—if—necessary."

He named the posthumous collaborator: an author of continental sensation at the moment, his latest novel having been "suppressed" by the Post-Office authorities and his next one advertised as procurable only by private subscription.—"We're making a point, too, of the illustrations, done from life, under your personal supervision, here in the hospital.—And I thought you might like to see this now—in case anything happens. You'll know, anyway, how we're doing it."

From a manila portfolio he displayed a large card-board, highly illuminated; he read aloud, triumphantly, the title flaring scarlet across the top:—"The Blue-Gingham Tragedy."

"What the devil's all that?"

"Cover-design for the book. It will come up stronger, of course, in the jacket."

But even now the sketch lacked nothing of the "strength" Kricke had in mind. It pictured, in flamboyant hues, a young girl, almost child-like, of piquante prettiness; but ghastly pale, wan-eyed, hollow-cheeked, attenuated figure. She had fallen, crumpled, in attitude of uttermost lassitude, into a tall throne-chair with covering of crimson satin. One hand, adorned with a marquise ring, hung limply over an arm of the chair in final token of exhaustion. The scenic splendour of the chair, more than the tragic pallor of the occupant and the theatrical posture, confused the observer.

"Some nurse, eh?" Kricke exulted.

"Yes, I rather thought she might be meant for some nurse—from that thermometer in her hand."

"That's no thermometer. Cigarette. But if you don't like it"—a gesture had intimated as much—"I'll take it out."

Cartell surrendered the sketch, eagerly.

"Do, please, Mr. Kricke. Take it out—all of it—quite out!" He looked, unconsciously, toward the door.

"You wrong me," Kricke hurried to reassure him. "I don't mean what you think, by that cigarette; not my 'Court-Scandals,' nor 'Bible Beauties.' Even *they* aren't selling at present. . . . Propaganda's the thing just now. The up-lift is what I'm after—and the shake-down; revolt—reform—what Dickens did and Charles Reade and—and Tolstoy.—Look!"—pointing through the open door. "There you have it!"

Eight or ten nurses trooped down the corridor in a carnival of color and fragrance; purple orchids in gilded baskets, white violets in wicker urns, long-stalked roses in bunches of unblushing extravagance, lurid azaleas in wicker distortions, Black-eyed Susans, and here and there a spindly geranium obviously from the side-walk market. And some well-meaning malaprop had sent a design of ghastly lilies, topped by a stuffed dove, that would do honor to a funeral-director.

The parade halted at a closed door; conference, in whispers, smiles, head-shakes, suppressed giggles;

question, apparently, how the patient would react to the albino squab with its mortuary garniture.

"Take those girls," Kricke resumed excitedly. "Start in the kitchen—food they get!"

"Pretty healthy set of girls," Cartell declared. "All look as though they eat enough."

"No one eats enough nowadays, what with the high—— Good heavens, man, do you ever look at that little student-nurse?"

"Twelve hours a day."

"And you don't see what you could do with *her*—that fawn-eyed wisp of a girl? Another Oliver Twist! Only much worse than Oliver—more touching—because of the petticoats. And better material, all around, than Dickens had to work on. And a larger audience to appeal to, because more people go to hospitals than to poor-houses. You can't deny that!"

Cartell didn't try to.

"Show the hard life of these girls—show it up! The long, exhausting, nerve-wracking hours in body-wrecking work. The three years of service without pay; that calico dress—always same color and same style—think what that must mean to a young woman!—And then the way the internes bully them—like regular Simon Legrees! And the awful operations they are compelled to see—and how the doctors blame them for their own blunders.—And how the patients nag them, from sheer cussedness.—And then all those stories that you hear about

the——” and he maundered on into the sumps of gossip; stirred up miasms of morphia and subtler drugs; of quick, careless loves—furtive caresses—tragic entanglements—bacchic revels in the presence of death; all the shameless inventions that ribald tongues and rotten minds give out until it seems as though a mistaken deity must think he had set an example sufficient unto all their kind and for all time in the fate of Ananias and Sapphira.

The patient paled in weariness, tossed and twisted. But Kricke, rapt by visions of a best-seller, kept at it, meandering from one side of the bed to the other, in pursuit of Cartell as the victim sought to rest, at least, an ear. Until, reaching a climax of mingled bathos and turpitude he asked triumphantly:

“Now what do you say to that?”

“Damn lies!”

“O, if you put it that way——”

“Best I can do, at present. Just plain—‘damn—lies!’ When my voice is stronger I’ll elaborate the adjective with a few heaven-defying adverbs, and I’ll shout them louder,”—he did, somewhat,—“a damn sight louder!”

“Now, now, now,” Kricke stammered, rather alarmed, “don’t get excited—Of course, I don’t really know from my own experience——”

“But you should”—Cartell broke in. “You’ve been coming here—often enough—to see—and to know—that *this* place—any place of this kind—is



a sort of—well, as near heaven as you or I will ever get! These people here—all of them—doctors, internes, nurses, orderlies, right on down the line to the humblest, are—are—well, wait until you're brought here some day, let's hope—with a broken-neck or something really serious. Then you'll know them as they really are—saints!"

Kricke jumped at the word—back to the shop.

"All right!" he agreed. "Make 'em saints—in shining robes! But show the seamy side—the dust on the hems. It's there, I'm telling you—from what I've always heard—and plenty others, too!"

"Where, Kricke?"—he was enraged now by the man's insistence.—"Where in hell do they get that—stuff?"

Miss Savile came in, quickly:

"You're wanted, sir"—to Kricke—"at the 'phone."

When he reached for the 'phone, in the hall, Miss Savile intervened:

"It was only I, sir, who wanted you. My patient has talked too much today. You get him so—interested. He raised his voice, you know, and probably his temperature. That won't do, sir."

"I thought I'd stir him up. I want to get him out of here."

"You will indeed, sir, if this keeps up. I'll get your hat."

"I'll get your hat," he mumbled to himself at the

outer door. The nerve of her—and with those baby eyes!”

Mr. Kricke had to leave in a hurry, she explained to the patient. She was sorry to interrupt the conversation: “You seemed to be enjoying it so thoroughly.”

Cartell’s reply was rather irrelevant: “In a way, you’re like Miss Drizzle.”

“Who is she, sir?”

“A quick ‘pick-up’—Mr. Kricke says—and *very* sympathetic.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MAGNIFICENT MADNESS OF CAPTAIN JIM

**O**FTEN, after leaving the hospital, Gribbles came back to call on Cartell. No one ever saw him enter, nor caught his talk with the sick man. He timed his visits cunningly: the twilight hours, while Miss Savile was at supper; or the grim stretches of a wakeful night, when the tremulous lamp behind the screen peopled the walls with shadow giants among whom the caller might pass unnoticed if Miss Newlands happened in.

Gribbles' message was set in phrase and point; repeated, over and over, in ghostly undertones, what he had told Cartell on the Porch.

The words had haunted with fiendish persistence, despite Miss Savile's heroic invention. Gribbles jeered at it—the union of 'hetero' and 'hypochondriasis'!—"A forced marriage, at the pistol-point, to save the nurse's chart from bar-sinister," the ghost was snarling when the Captain brought in the evening papers and the box of cigars he had fetched for the patient.

Cartell winced at his greeting:

"You'll be leaving us soon, sir."

"So Gribbles has been telling me," the patient doled.

"We'll be sorry to lose you."

"Thank you, Captain."

"I'll certainly miss you, sir."

"I'll miss myself," he mumbled.

"Where do you think you'll go?"

Voice failing him, a shrug of helplessness answered for Cartell.

"Some warm place, I'd suggest."

"So does Gribbles.—Don't bother to open those 'Rufus Choates' "——

"I didn't bring the 'Choates,' sir. They didn't look fit. They never have since the Syndic grabbed them and pinched out a third of the tobacco. I took the liberty to bring instead these 'Mercutio's.' Running very good, of late. They're no longer popular, and they've improved immensely."

"Take the box with you, Captain. Enjoy them. I shan't ever want them."

"Why, sir?—Have they cut out your tobacco?"

"No, but"—and to the Captain prompting, he blurted, shamefaced, his dread and omens.

"But that's too absurd, sir! Out of all reason! Unconstitutional!—We're not losing patients this year."

"There's always a first," Cartell sighed. "And I have a presentiment——"

"Yes, but you also have Miss Savile!" the Cap-

tain broke in. "What's a presentiment against her? Or, in her absence, Miss Newlands? And all this environment of youth and beauty? You couldn't go wrong with that!"

Cartell took it for kindly, if futile, fooling. But the Captain's tone was intensely serious and certain.

"Why, sir, to fail us now, you'd have to defy every precedent. In my long experience in this hospital," he went on with calm assurance, "I do not recall one case that ended badly if entrusted to a handsome nurse, even though young and inexperienced."

"Possibly they don't get the desperate cases."

"They got yours! And they *should*, sir, get every desperate case. They always do here, if I can possibly contrive it. Mostly I can, with luck and a little manœuvering, which the results fully justify. If anything can revivify a man in collapse—awake the will-to-live—and that's a mighty force!—it is the presence of pulchritude. That, sir, is among the most potent elements of the *vis-naturæ-medicatrix*.—Have a 'Mercurio.' "

Cartell lighted the perfecto. The talk, for all its droll extravagance, was, somehow, soothing.

The Captain enlarged upon his theory: cited antique authority and immediate instances. He held, clearly, the pagan faith in the efficacy of grace, the alchemy of beauty. In the light of that faith he had come upon a curious material science. Kallitherapy, he named it.

Cartell ventured to question the essential premise of the system:

“You can’t presume every nurse to be positively beautiful.”

“ ’Tisn’t required, sir, in the minor cases; not in that degree. Sufficient, there, if she be no worse than merely plain. Against that the costume can hold its own. But for the man *in extremis*, with bad heart-action and faint ralliance, no nurse should be positively ugly. Stands to reason, sir. ’Tisn’t constitutional!—If, at this moment, you still survive, enjoying that ‘Mercutio’——”

“Immensely, thanks to you——”

The Captain disclaimed it. To Miss Savile, the credit, to Miss Newlands, and, in equal degree, to this nurse and that, who by their mere presence——  
“That is all-sufficient. ’Tisn’t what they do! It’s what they are—radio-active! Reservoirs of Light, tangible, palpable, even measurable. Gamma-rays in blue-gingham!”

He had proved it, to his own satisfaction, not only by intimate observation but by the familiar device of Sir William Crookes. And he looked for general conviction to the recent refinements of the Dewar machine.

Only a few days ago he had seen his theory practised, even though not acknowledged, by Fenway and Hampden. A case of anæmia that persisted unresponsive, stubborn, stone-cold to three blood-transfusions. The physicians stood perplexed; all

the conditions promised response, and yet the patient in the last stages of collapse. And the nurse in charge was one in the last stages of efficiency; selected, with jealous care, by the patient's wife.

Then it was that the Captain, presuming on his high age and regard, dared greatly: suggested—to these famed physicians!—still more blood. Not in the patient, but the nurse! So he phrased it—too gallant a gentleman to speak plainly of her plainness: her time-faded cheek, lack-lustre eye, huffish locks, her laggard, listless step. And he dared further: Since the patient was dark, let the nurse be blonde, and preferably—he raved—a student-nurse, not only for the sake of the youth but for the blue-gingham, whereby the peach-pink complexion will show to the full, and the azure eye, and the glint of the hair, and all the brilliance of blonde beauty! He spoke with fanatic fervor, and his hearers pitied him—'dear, old Captain'—and humored him.

There had been so many changes in the treatment of the baffling case, nothing else remained to change except the nurse. "Can't hurt, may help." They selected Miss Gwinett who happened to conform most nearly to the Captain's specifications.

When the physicians looked in that evening, the patient was sitting up in bed and taking notice—not so much of his supper-tray as of the Hebe who brought it. The crisis was over, safely.

The doctors came from the room, smiling like

Cheshire cats. As they went by the Captain he dared the limit. "Who's looney now?" he asked them, with all due deference and a wink.

Therein, perhaps, lies the "mystery" of Captain Forrester: his extravagant, fantastic theory of feminine loveliness and its virtues of therapy. Sane on all other subjects, here he was hipped, obsessed, moon-struck.—Time, of course, may contradict this—just as in the case of Galileo, Harvey, Langley. Meanwhile, his delusion evolved delightful fancies. He visioned, among these nurses, the world's most famous beauties: the idols of the theatre, the ideals of the palette in conceit or portraiture.

"Miss Killarney might have sat for Carlo Dolci's Madonna—if you recall it, sir, in the Uffizi gallery at Florence. Sometimes I think she knows it; she can dance divinely—delights to—but won't!—That tall, statuesque Miss De Lancy—Mary Anderson, over again, as *Perdita*; her blue-gingham very like the costume of *Perdita's* rustic dance. And when our young lady dons the white of the graduate, you'll find the resemblance transform to Mary's *Hermione*.—In the Rospigliosi palace, in Rome, you will see Miss Trenholm's portrait—painted by Guido Reni—in the guise of Aurora.—Miss Condé, the Bishop's daughter, is Boucher's La Pompadour; the lambent glance, the pastel tints, the poise of the head.—Nell Gwynne's rakish eyes, half-closed by wrinkling laughter, peer from beneath Miss Beau-



clerc's cap.—Cosway's Lady Manners bequeathed her prim prettiness to Miss Newlands.—There, half-reclining on the garden-bench, you have David's Julie Recamier—in the person of Miss Winsten. Nearby, swinging in the hammock, is twin sister to Sir Joshua's Nelly O'Brien.—Miss Audenrieth's features might be irregular,—yet Sargent chose to paint them for his Carmencita."

In the spacious gallery of his imagination every nurse hung "on the line"—copies incarnate of Vandyke's Marchese Balbi—Reynolds' Anne Bingham—Henner's Daniela—Laurence's Miss Croker—Raeburn's Mrs. Bell—Fragonard's Louise Lamballe, Landseer's Marchioness of Abercorn—Botticelli's Ariadne——

"And Miss Savile, sir,—you've seen her in a sulk, of course?"

"Never," Cartell rejoiced, "not even a pout."

"Oh, then you've missed something—the gem of our gallery: Greuze at his best—'La Cruche Cassée'! You won't get it, sir, when the little lady is serene; but pouting, frowning, fretted—as when she's let fall a noisy clamp or fragile flask, and been scolded for it—'The Broken Pitcher' steps to life!"

From the talk at Mrs. Moncrieff's table a phrase recurred to Cartell:—

"A comet-vintage of blue-gingham!"

"*Une spécialité de la maison,*" Forrester continued the metaphor. . . . "In my time they've all been here, sir,—every one, almost, except the Mona

Lisa. We've been denied her. And that isn't mere luck, sir! A conscious Providence looking out for the helpless. Think of some poor patient having to endure Lisa's smirking simper day after day—and no chance of escape! Why, sir, even in the full vigor of youth, I used to shun the gallery of the Louvre where Lisa hung. I've read, lately, that the stolen canvas has been replaced by a counterfeit, but that it 'lacks something of the inimitable smile.' What a blessing, sir! She might have turned up here, some day."

By rule, seemingly, the Captain chose his similitudes from the palettes of the elect and matched them, with professional purpose, almost exclusively from the nurses' corps.

But, occasionally, he hung a convalescent. Never, though, unless he had reason to believe that her beauty was exercising along the lines of his theory of therapy. Then, for some reason, he would forsake the antique or classic and turn for likeness to a canvas of the moment, taken from a dealer's window, or an Academy exhibit, or a magazine-cover.

Lately he astonished the personnel by announcing the presence on the Porch of Marie Jeritza—just then in her first flight at the Metropolitan—and directed their inquiring gaze to a glowing copy in the flesh of Arthur Halmi's portrait. . . . The patient's first appearance in public—that day—after some particularly cunning magic of surgery. And yet the sapphire of her eyes, the glint of the hair,

the rich carmine of cheek, and the richer cerise of lip flashed the electricity with which Jeritza shocked her rivals of the opera.

You must come to a hospital to see Nature at her best . . . her genius of surprise, her artful confusion of some of her own laws, her mocking of that age-old wheeze about "the weaker sex." Though her one hand excarnate her afflicted daughter, the other will incarnadine the remnant with the blush and sparkle of triumphant youth.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CASE OF THE TWO LILLY'S—AND SOME OTHERS

*Being Excerpts from Captain Forrester's Unpublished Volume: "The Therapeutics of Pulchritude; with a Consideration of Feminine Loveliness as a Manifestation of Radio-Activity."*<sup>1</sup>

OF the curative potencies of Beauty the writer became convinced by long observation and experience in circumstances peculiarly fortunate. He does not pretend to discovery of the truth; only re-discovery. It is older than trephining. In a papyrus of 1553 B.C. an Egyptian physician proclaims his employment of Beauty as a "healing power." Hippocrates counted Beauty an element of the spiritual restoring essence—*phusis*—*the vis medicatrix naturæ*—on which he based his principles and praxis.

He was the fashionable physician of his day, and none of his prescriptions found quicker credence, even among the wisest and most skeptical. So that

<sup>1</sup> Since the above went to press Captain Forrester's volume has been announced for publication by the well-known house of Bodley Kricke: elaborately illustrated, in three colors, by Kevan Varrey.

Beauty was not merely the diversion of the gay, the witty, the voluptuary; wisdom and philosophy correct beyond the hurt of edacious centuries courted her companionship as an elixir. . . . Aristotle and Socrates falling ill at the same time, tourneyed for the services of a certain Theodota. . . . Plato, for all his sonorous nonsense about the ideal love, always took shelter in the house of Archeanassa when he happened to get caught out in the rain, and usually "dashed off" impromptu verses to celebrate her system of curing a cold. . . . Sophocles wrote nothing more impassioned than his prayer that little Theoris might not jilt his sciatica for the lumbago of Demosthenes, who at the first twinge sent her an autographed copy of his latest works—the literary man's usual substitute for the roses, bonbons and brooches of merely rich wooers. . . .

And there's the case of Menander and his nurse. When Ptolemy offered him brilliant prizes to attach himself to the court of Alexandria, the poet did not blush to answer that he could not leave his Thalatta, 'who alone could soothe his sickness-of-the-head.'

'Bring her with you,' the King suggested. 'No, no!' he said. 'That would deprive others of her ministrations. I'm not the only man in Athens who gets headaches.'

It is to be regretted that this unselfish sentiment does not obtain generally. Some precious nurses would thus be saved to science from matrimony—a state that is notoriously deadly to radio-activity.

For the purpose of my theory, a nurse married is a nurse marred.

Modernly, the virtue of Beauty as an agent of therapy has received scant notice from the members of the medical profession. Indeed, consideration of the subject has rested almost wholly with philosophers, dilettanti and quacks. And yet certain familiar facts cannot have escaped the faculty: *Les-droits-du-Seigneur*, invoked primarily to redden the blue blood of an anæmic aristocracy; and the homelier practice among folk who live close to the soil, not only in Europe but in the backwoods of this country, where buxom youth is brought in as a last resort to assuage the ravages of age.

Professor Norton of Harvard suspected the affinity of health and Beauty, and hints it in his definition of the latter. Apparently he reached this conclusion through pure intelligence. The Cambridge of his day did not conduce to experimental work in the subject; Cambridgeport still less. And the standard of Boston, near-by, was so peculiar to the locale as to be useless for scientific generalization.

Curiously enough, the most daring pioneer in this field was an Irish politician with the temperament of the Athenian and the pragmatism of the Roman: Edmund Burke was on his way to the ultimate truth in "The Sublime and Beautiful." He might have

gone all the way, perhaps, had his century known a Becquerel or Madame Curie.

Before his time—and, in the main, since, too—Beauty has wallowed in a sea of spuming theoretics; tossed and tumbled from the crest of psychology to the trough of metaphysics. Burke brought it into the calmer currents of physiology. He saw Beauty to be a purely physical force, acting mechanically, with physiologic results. Venus he reduces to a glorified masseuse, suffused with some exhilarant force that needs not the actual laying-on of hands.

Others took up the clue—notably Helmholtz and Grant Allen—and searched for the physiological concomitants of the works. Later, Fechner made laboratory experiments in the same direction.<sup>1</sup> But the secret eluded them: remained literally the needle-point of radium in a mountain of pitchblende.

Burke, far beyond any of his time, studied his subject at first hand. He learned, by passionate devotion to his purpose and fearless personal adventure, just what Beauty does to a body—to blood, muscles and nerves. What he himself missed he gathered from the experiences of his eclectic group of cronies: the actor Garrick, Sam Johnson, Reynolds, Soame Jenyns, Littleton, Marquis Rockingham—all plain-thinkers but high-livers; three-bottle men, of full-habit. So he knew intimately what he was talking about, and so could make others know.

<sup>1</sup> Vide: "Vorschule der Aesthetik" (1876).

Which is more than can be said, honestly, of the Herbartians and Hegelians and Kantians.

Yet they ranged so far in the quest, over so many fields and diverse, it is strange none stumbled into the lighted path. It lay under their philological nose, lucent in almost every phrase of their discussions.

As a form of Light men have always sensed Beauty, naturally and spontaneously, and so termed it. Beauty to the Greeks was Light—*áglaiá*: to the Latins—*pulcher*: to the Teutons—*schoen*. Plotinus makes Light synonymous with Beauty and dwells on their common quality of “spatial diffusion,” an idea borrowed, I need not tell you, from Plato’s “Republic.”

From the light of her eye the *houri* of the Easterns takes her name—and fortune. Lacking that, she is not beautiful in their sight. In all else she may conform to their immemorial rule of Fours, but without that candent essence—so they know it—she may not enter the Paradise of the faithful nor the *zenana* of the mighty. And her rank in the harem is apportioned to the power of the light: the horse-power, one might say. The Orientals, exquisitely sensitized by time and with the occult lore of the Magi at their finger-ends, take the measure of the *houri* intuitively, with no need of mechanics.—A vain imagining, we shall presently discover.



Conventionally we speak of Beauty as splendid, brilliant, sparkling, flashing, beaming, lustrous, glowing, garish, dazzling, delightful, radiant—above all, radiant! Always it strikes us, mechanically, in terms of light and radiation. The blonde is the arch troubler—ideal and adagial—not by reason of any superiority of line or temper, but because her color-scheme—gold of hair, blue of eye, pink of skin—radiates light more freely than the darker surfaces of the brunette.<sup>1</sup>

This may be proved, beyond cavil, by noting the relative activity of a Crookes' radiometer in the presence of a blonde and of a brunette.

Regard, too, that without light there is not Beauty. Mere suavity of color is something,—the Stoics made much of color, as did Cicero and Xenophon—and grace of line and correct features; but by themselves, without illumination, we name them cold, dull, logy, dollish, wishy-washy, phlegmatic, fishy. "Faultily faultless, icily regular"—but null!

And by the same token there may be fascination in the freckled cheek, the squat nose, thickish lips, the rebel hair, even brick-red—if only there be light within! And usually with this last, there is. Light redundant, that flames from the molten iron of the blood into the glowing tresses, flecks the satin skin with freckles, flashes out in the iris. . . . That type

<sup>1</sup> Vide: Nirdlinger's "The Superstition About Brunettes" in his volume of theatrical studies entitled: "Masques and Mummers."

mates early—and surely. The red-haired old-maid is a rare bird.

In forty years of hospital service I encountered among the nurses only one such instance. And my theory of radio-activity received no setback from her eccentric and self-imposed spinsterhood: her cases prospered amazingly.

For that phenomenon there was nothing to account except her luminal activity. In form and feature she was not actively beautiful; rather retro-active. In the ordinary activities of her profession as a nurse she was crudely equipped and notably careless. Yet she served brilliantly.

In the practice of kallitherapy the predilection of the patient is always a factor to be considered; the type to which the man constitutionally responds: blonde, brunette, châtaine or rufous.

A striking instance in point, occurring at the B. M. H., came to be known among the hospital-staff as 'the case of the two Lilly's'—Mrs. Langtry and Miss Russell—each in charge of a desperate case. . . . Oh, yes, they had those famous beauties there—in copy, of course—several times during the decades of their vogue.—May I divert to doubt that their lusty style would hold a candle to the present delicacies of line and color. Theirs was the period of the ox-eyed and peroxide.—Both cases were going very badly: practically given up. Then, by some chance rather than design, the nurses changed

posts; the dark Mrs. Langtry took Miss Russell's blonde patient, and vice-versa. Magical! In five days the patients were on their feet—and, incidentally, proposing marriage.

In this 'case of the two Lilly's' the test of the Crookes' radiometer was rather negative; the machine responded impartially to the olive tints and to the peach.

Further corroboration of this theory followed the most ingenious experiment of recent science—and the most ingenuous blunder; a characteristic example at once of scientific insight and oversight.

During the Ophthalmological Congress at Oxford there was shown an instrument whereby the light emanating from the human eye may be precisely measured. The invention,—hailed, and properly, as epochal—consists of a brass cylinder in which hangs a tenuous spiral of copper wire. This solenoid is wound upon a cylinder of celluloid and is suspended by a fibre of cocoon silk contained within a long glass tube hermetically sealed. A small magnet holds the solenoid in position, and the apparatus is electrically earthed by a connective wire.

The report of the experiment at Oxford stated that when the inventor<sup>1</sup> gazed steadily through the window-slot at one end of the suspended body it would start into motion away from the observer's

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Charles Russ, M. B., M. R. C. S., L. R. C. P.

eye. When he looked at the true centre it stopped; if he gazed at the opposite end it moved in the reverse direction.

From this it was deduced, and not unreasonably, that there was an actual transmission of power from the eye; some form of molecular vibration or atomic emanation analogous, presumably, to heat or light.

With the aid of a deft electrician, the writer constructed an instrument conforming as nearly as may be to the specifications quoted above. And when subjected to the glance of the human eye, it behaved quite after the fashion reported from Oxford.

Extending the experiments, it appeared that the motion of the suspended body varied markedly with different eyes, being much more prompt of response in some cases than in others. Under certain eyes its movement became quite eccentric: even violent. It was noted, too, that the machine was apparently susceptible to color, the vibration varying with the hue of the observing iris.

Now intervened one of those happy accidents that Science occasionally stumbles over and either breaks its neck or kicks up a precious nugget.

A nurse temporarily disabled by some nervous affection of the eyes so that they had to be blindfolded was led into the room to hear something of the experiments to which several of her colleagues had contributed. As she approached the machine it at once resumed its oscillation, though completely

insulated from any ocular influence. With each step nearer, the motion grew livelier.

The suggestion was obvious. Every nurse in turn was again placed before the machine, *but this time with her eyes tightly closed.*

“Eppure si muove!”—the machine.

There was still a possibility that the ocular emanation had pierced the closed eye-lids. So the experiment was repeated *with a thick pewter tray interposed between the subject and the object.*

And still the machine moved!

In each case, too, the degree of motion was the same as when the nurse's eye was in unobstructed play upon the solenoid, and varied identically as did the radiometer in the presence of the various nurses.

The deduction was inescapable: the propulsive force did *not*<sup>1</sup> come from the eye; or, at least, no more than from the generating agent in its entirety. Which dispels the curious delusion of the Orientals who have vainly imagined for ages that the “candent essence” of the houri asserts itself solely through the eye.

<sup>1</sup> This view of the validity of the Oxford demonstration is shared by Dr. George B. Pegram, dean of the School of Engineering of Columbia University, according to the *New York Evening Post*. A similar experiment, some years ago by M. Blondlot of Paris, was flouted by a famous physicist of Johns Hopkins University. But it remained for Capt. Forrester to pursue the “eye-force” to its lair and to prove by actual physical demonstration that, like the Irishman's flea, it was somewhere else.

With these evidences of personal pulchritude as a manifestation of radio-activity—the carnation of carnotite—we may well advert to the unscientific ordering of the nurse's training.

These young women are put through three years of a grilling pace—to prove their learning, zeal, intelligence, health and general character. Which is well enough; quite constitutional.

But the wear and tear of their physical graces—what havoc the hard novitiate may work to their beauty—no thought is taken of that!—though it touches the most precious quality of all that they bring to their calling.

License to practice is given, or withheld, without the slightest regard to the accidents of their personal appearance. In general, I believe, the authorities, and even more the public, incline to favor the less favored. Which, in my theory, is literally unconstitutional. . . .

Yet that spirit, one fears, informs the probation. The climb to the License is made steep, bleak and rocky:<sup>1</sup> needlessly so. Instead, the road to the

<sup>1</sup> Captain Forrester exaggerates the rigors of the probation. The student-nurse is on duty only twelve hours at a stretch, except when an "emergency case" may require an additional six or eight hours of service. The rest of the day, save for the enjoined period of sleep, she is foot-loose except for a few hours of study and lectures. The subjects in which she must become proficient before receiving license to nurse—after three years of actual nursing in a hospital—include: Hygiene and sanitation, materia medica, bandaging, the principles and practice of nursing, the composition and dietetic value of foods, principles of general and invalid cooking, operating-room technique, massage, anatomy and physiology, bacteriology.

Registry should be primrose; or at least daisied with such diversions as obtain even in a Normal College. The fare might well include an occasional leaven of ambrosia and nectar as being more conducive to vibrance than oatmeal, prunes and goulasch: sturdy but sombre. The matter of attire may safely be left to their own fancy; few would abjure blue-ingham. . . . In all things the calling of the nurse should be made so alluring by its environs, rewards and prestige that beautiful women would be drawn to it instead of to the stage. From that angle one visions Beauty directed by the State, for the general good, just as radium is coming to be and as the ballet continues to be in Russia.

To members of the Medical Profession who may hesitate to employ Kallitherapy in their practice, the writer begs to say that he submitted the manuscript of this volume to the famous Dr. Fenway, with a request that he destroy it after reading if he found the theory to be untenable or its application perilous. Instead, he returned it to the author with this conclusive endorsement:

“Can’t hurt. May help.”

## CHAPTER XVI

### A CLINIC OF MODES, MANNERS AND MOTIVES

MISS LEDYARD, of Pembroke County," the nurse had introduced her on her first entrance to the Club.

There were cliques in The Porch, of course, as in all clubs: some quick intimacies, with established rendezvous in farthest corners. The convalescent's chair had wheeled, seemingly of its own volition, to a group of the nurse's shrewd selection. Miss Beauclerc, though thoroughly imbued with the democracy of the place, never quite accepted the careless "mixing" of convalescents. It wasn't a matter of 'class'—Psychosis! Her present charge required, above all else, diversion and distraction, and she'd most likely get it in the company that centered about the Contessa and the Veiled-Lady.

Interest and admiration buzzed about the new member. Something of the history of the case may have transpired, in that strange way that tells things in a hospital without the spoken word. But quite by herself, apart from any hint of adventure, Miss Ledyard prevailed by a quality confusing, elusive,



mystifying: suggesting infinite changefulness and sudden possibilities. "The sort of woman"—the Contessa Bianchi described her—"that only one man in the world ever really knows.—And most of the time she'll keep him guessing."

Her beauty was unassertive, the insinuating harmony of vague colorings compassed in *châtain*.

Much given to reverie. That may have prompted the Contessa's judgment—and the far-away look of her eyes, and an air of unconscious detachment from her surroundings. Her smile, faint, wistful almost to sombreness, accorded with a voice of softest cadence and yet capable—you somehow imagined—of flashing suddenly into passionate storm and swearing richly. A creature, altogether, rare, perturbing, confounding, delightful.

So that one impulsive gentleman having failed to touch her heart by the usual devices touched it with a Derringer; barely touched it—grazed, rather—by the will of heaven or the button of a camisole. One or both turned the missile to a minor operation, and the tragedy to a mere "accident." Which Miss Ledyard seemed to remember so pleasantly that she enjoined her nurse to be sure to secure the bullet from the surgeons; she hoped to return it, some day, to the owner.

Miss Beauclerc, being of the same county as her patient—and knowing the ancient courtesies there—saw especial need of mental diversion.

Margot Allyn was of the party today—sharing

their tea and cinnamon-toast freely until Mrs. Moncrieff, joining the group later, glared reminder that visitors weren't supposed—nor permitted—to do anything of the sort—a glass of water being the limit of exception. But Margot meanwhile had been giving full ecot of entertainment.

The theme that intrigued her so persistently, merely ennuied Miss Ledyard. It was all so perfectly obvious to her thinking: Women loathe by nature monotony, humdrum, common-place. Most of them—by order of Providence or the male's good-luck—haven't the wit to escape it. The rest—the restless rest—go with the urge to career: stage, palette, letters, convent, nurse's-bench—anything to get out of the ordinary. "All else failing,"—her voice trailed to wistfulness—"they become plain hellion." And as for the occasional romance—Margot ha-ha-ed the 'occasional!'—why, a man may be brought to love by show of interest—real or pretended—in the color of his cravat, the cut of his hair—his choice of a menu—the make of his car—his view on books, plays, music, the Balkan puzzle or the Pragmatic Sanction.—Here he meets a girl—chance acquaintance—whose one concern, for the moment, is his very life——

"Yes, yes, but it's that uniform that does the trick," Margot interrupted—"that cunning costume—*literally* cunning, believe me. And men can't see through it!"

"No, they can't see through it," Miss Ledyard

repeated, quizzingly. "That may be secret of it all—the trick of it—that simple, primitive dress with its ankle-length skirt and long sleeve and high-buttoned waist."

"Right you are!" the Contessa applauded: "He's tired of counting the vertebrae in her spinal column, down to her waist-line, and a bone or two below in a new Callot model they were showing me.—He doesn't get excited over her sharing with him—and every Tom, Dick and Harry—bosom-secrets that belong only to her husband and her babies.

"They're fed up with women's clothes that they can see in—and through—and over—and under. Because when she crosses her B-V-D's—and we all do!—lean or fat, spindly or gracile, lace, silk or cotton—what's left to his imagination is so—so—well, her husband could never get divorce on the grounds the goods weren't as represented: he sees about all he's going to get before he gets it.—And as for the lure and witchery of the shaved armpit——"

"Oh, my dear!"

"Yes, it is almost too *intime* to talk about. But if you imagine *that* fascinates—well, I'll bet that nine times out of ten when she thinks that far-off look is rapture, he's only wondering if the job was done by a Gillette or the old-style Durham, and whether she had the barber in or did it herself with the safety."

"But there's always some reason for a fashion,"

Margot generalized weakly. "Don't you suppose a woman's intuition tells her what to do, in such matters?"

"Certainly! Perhaps that's why the girls took to wearing their hair over their ears—so they couldn't possibly hear what intuition was telling them. Concealment!"

For retort Margot grasped at the accepted phrases:

"Mock modesty!"

"Better than none!—And for all practical purposes," the Contessa confided, "as good as the real thing. Men don't know the difference—and trying to find out is one of his traditional diversions and makes a lot of marriages."

Miss Condé showing in the door-way, Margot beckoned her to the group: "Get in on this *conversazione!*"

"Cat-fight!" the Contessa translated, and repeated the theme: "Why girls leave home—for hospitals?"

They knew, of course, in *her* case, Margot assured the nurse:—"Bred in the bone, call of the blood—this sort of thing—carries on the family-business, in a way.—But take a girl like that Miss Sa——" She stopped at a faint but unmistakable stamp of Miss Condé's foot.

The personal point Margot replaced with acuter bluntness of expression. The theme, apparently, obsessed her. At sight of a nurse—white or blue—

she saw red. A phenomenon by no means unusual; actually typical according to Professor Talapoff, the Finnish savant. In his book on "The Nurse-Impulse" he *résumés* his talks on the subject with nearly three thousand women, all classes, countries and ages, and in almost every instance the view recorded was essentially that of Margot as she had just intimated it.

There might be an occasional exception, she granted. "But in most cases—own up, Miss Condé!—it's just the good old game—Cherchez-l'homme.—That's what's back of it—I'll tell the world.—Man-hunt!"

Miss Condé flushed crimson: half-turned on her heel, but swung back, smiling and apparently calmed.

"O, men aren't so rare and precious as all that! A woman doesn't have to make herself into a combination house-maid, cook, laundress, bath-attendant, child's-nurse, masseuse, doctor, minister and, sometimes, assistant-undertaker, and keep it up three solid years, bound by rules and regulations as to her coming-in and going-out and what she should wear—in order to get the chance to grab a scared, scarred male-specimen when he's too weak to fight back. If you tell me that some girls go in for nursing,—just as some women take to the stage or settlement-work or tea-shops—in order to 'live their life,' 'be on their own'—free and independent to do as they darn please when they're off duty, why, I'll

listen to the rot.—But don't ask me to believe that a girl like Miss Savile—or that perfectly corking Miss Trenholm—can't find a man outside this morgue-annex."

Until this very last she had spoken evenly and amusedly; but now her voice trembled under the pull of repression, and she left them abruptly as though sensing her temper was getting out of hand.

The little storm hardly breezed Margot's conviction:

"There's always *something* back of it—believe me!—You suppose *she's* here of her own choice?"

"Not likely," Miss Ledyard agreed. "Heredity probably had to drag her here by the hair.—And did you ever see such a gorgeous tint? Pure Henner!"

"Henner or henna?" Margot wondered.

"Never!" Mrs. Moncrieff protested angrily. "They're above all that sort of thing!"

"And besides you can't get that shade with henna," the Contessa added, "I've tried it."

## CHAPTER XVII

### A DINNER OF CONSEQUENCE

**P**ARDON, Madame, but why do you choose Gannert's?" the Captain asked.

The Contessa had wearied, somewhat, of the hospital-trays. 'Might she have dinner sent in to-night, from a Restaurant?—Gannert's, preferably. And—yes!—served on the Porch. There'd be light enough, the moon's full—unless, of course, it's against the rules.'

Miss Trenholm thought not—rather dubiously. She would have to consult Miss Beaux.

"Quite so. And the Captain, perhaps, will attend to the rest?"

"Delighted, Madame, but why do you select Gannert's?" he repeated.

"I've always heard," she answered, "the cuisine there is excellent."

"It was, Madame, in the last century. Yes, twenty-five years ago one dined very well at Gannert's. As well, almost, as at Delmonico's, or Mr. Boldt's 'Bellevue,' or the Café Vefour—or even Canfield's in Saratoga. The aroma still clings, in the town's imagination. We are loyal to our proud

traditions, stubbornly loyal. Gannert's cuisine is one of them. In point of fact, Madame, what you get there now is no longer a dinner: it's a superstition."

If he might suggest——

Certainly; wherever he thought best. The menu, also, she left to him; put herself in his hands, sans-reserve, for the evening.

"And order service, please, for two. You'll join me?"—she asked the nurse.

"If you wish, of course, but—er—I—was intending to see the eclipse tonight, with a friend.

"By all means, my dear. Don't miss that. They come around so seldom."

"Yes. He's an interne at Bellevue, in New York. Rarely gets over here."

The confusion went unnoticed, the Contessa's attention fixed elsewhere.

"I say, Trenny, who is that interesting-looking man, over there?"

"Which one?"

"There's only one, you Sly-puss. He's always reading Wall Street papers."

The nurse told what little she knew of 'the Grand Mogul.'

"How exciting!" the Contessa found the nickname: "Is it his manner, or merely his——?" twiddling her fingers.

"Very rich," the other whispered; "lord of all he surveys, in his home county."



“How romantic!”—said with a glance straight at Huggins, and spoken so he shouldn’t hear but could if he cared to. Then, a trifle louder:

“Rather *young*, isn’t he?”

Miss Trenholm didn’t know his age.

“But it’s on the chart, isn’t it?”

“Yes, but——”

“Find out—that’s a dear—and tell me.”

“Impossible! ’Gainst the rules.”

“How perfectly silly! I’m sure anyone may know my age—on the chart. Just as if it mattered, if you don’t look it. And he certainly doesn’t. Come to think, I’ve never seen his wife call here.”

“He hasn’t any: bachelor.”

“And very rich, you said. What a chance for that pretty nurse of his!”

Miss Trenholm took to her knitting, intensively.

“You’ll ruin your eyes, my dear, in this dark corner. Can’t we find a sunnier place—some-where?” She nodded across the Porch, and finally manœuvered her chair next to Mr. Huggins.

Intrenched behind the newspaper, he made not to notice the approach; but his plan fell before her attack, novel and startling:

“You’re looking worse today, Mr. Huggy.”

“Huggins, Madame,” he corrected. “I’d like to return your compliment, but, unfortunately, you’re looking your best, as usual.”

“That’s certainly very nice.”

"No, it isn't—it's very disturbing."—And he buried his nose in *The Financial Chronicle*.

"I'm sorry if I affect you that way, but, happily, I'm going away in a day or two."

"I hope so, Madame."

The Countess turned on him the eyes of a wounded fawn:

"That *isn't* very nice, Mr. Huggins."

"Why not? You wouldn't want to stay here forever, would you? God knows I want to get out of the place!"

"O, but you mustn't think of it, until you're looking better. You wouldn't want your friends to see you, this way. And when you leave here you should travel."

"I'm going to—straight home—where I can get some food. I s'pose you're going back to Europe?"

"Not 'mediately. I've taken a place on this side, for some months—to recuperate: just a bit of a box."

"With *you* in it, a jewel-box, you expect me to say!"

"No one could possibly expect you to say anything so foolish!" Her wheeled-chair turned, threatening flight, but——

"Pardon, Madame, if that sounded rude."

"Shockingly so—after all the pleasant things I've been hearing of you, from the nurses and everybody.—Perhaps, though, I'm a trifle over-strung these days."

“Yes, I understand you’ve lately had a serious misfortune.”

“No, quite slight—the operation. Nothing to speak of.”

The Mogul’s voice lowered, in sympathy: “I was referring, Countess, to your personal affairs.”

“O—o—h?” Amazing—the volume of pleased surprise and gratitude for his interest she put into that one little word.

“Widow, aren’t you?”

“Worse than that,” through a ripple of laughter.

“Impossible, Madame!”

With disarming candour she confided her foreign entanglements, their quick disillusion and their final severance. “Now, isn’t that worse than merely widow?”

“Not by a long shot—to my thinking!”

“Apparently, you don’t believe in widows?”

“I feel about widows same as I do about ghosts. I don’t believe in them, but I’m afraid of ’em.”

The Countess smiled, incredulously. “You’d never make me believe that!—How are stocks behaving, these days?” and she nudged her chair a trifle closer as if to get a peek at the quotations.

Huggins took no notice of the question nor her way of pointing it. Instead, he asked:

“Where’s this—‘box’—you’ve taken? Newport?”

“O, dear, man, I couldn’t afford that—the way

shares are acting and after all my dreadful bills here—and that perfectly wicked income tax.”

Now, by ordinary, that should have set Mr. Huggins off. Her characterization of the hated impost promised a responsive audience—something usually denied him on the Porch. But here now was his soul's twin—on one point at least. And, yet, he shirked the chance. Or else missed it utterly, his thoughts being elsewhere; on that chalet, apparently, where she planned retreat from worldly frivols. For he insisted on further detail.

“Oh, it's something quite simple and primitive, a mere rustic hut; sort of thing you'd probably use for a gate-lodge or a garage. But will just suit me, the nurse says. I had her motor down there, to look it over. The dear girl needed a day's outing—after all these weeks with my tantrums. The region is charming, she tells me—quite the prettiest in Jane Arundel County.”

“Anne—not Jane!”

“Thanks! You do seem to know everything. If, by any chance, you ever get down that way——”

“I rarely get away from there, Madame: that's my home—Anne Arundel.”

A pair of blue eyes opened wide in wonder and delight, as a child's might at sudden sight of a new toy. “Why”—the Contessa gasped—“what—an—amazing coincidence!—O, do, please, tell me all about the place—my neighbors and the climate—and everything. I know I'm going to be happy

there. I adore the country—especially with agreeable neighbors. I don't suppose, though, my little place is anywhere near yours. The nurse says Nell Arundel is quite a roomy county."

The pace was a trifle swift for cautious Mr. Huggins, and trending unduly toward the personal. So he asked:

"What sort of stocks have you?"

"I don't really know—except, of course, such things as Consols, and Rentes—and Rio-Tinto's. My agent never tells me anything. It's so hard to find anyone you can rely on, in such matters."

"Ever try a Trust Company?"

"Oh, they're such cold, impersonal things. And are they always quite reliable?"

"Mine is—one I'm president of."

No mere 'coincidence,' this—an act of Providence, and inviting, again, ocular strategy and the purr of dependence. Huggins may have been looking for it. But the Contessa was too much the artist to repeat an effect.

Instead, she voiced disillusion: "O-o-h—banker?—I'd never have taken you for—I saw, of course, from your literature, that you were interested in finance, but I took you, rather, for—well—cotton—or horses—bridge-building or oil-wells—something of the big out-of-doors—the strenuous, delightful ruffian type that does things. That's what I took you for!"

"Are you sure, Ma'am"—his tone winked—"quite sure you didn't take me for a fool?"

"There!—I *knew* you were the brutal kind!—And I was just wondering would you dine with me tonight—here, on the Porch. I'm having dinner sent in—and there's a full moon."

"No good tonight, ma'am. There's an eclipse, the papers say—total eclipse!"

"Oh, *that's* what's doing it?—You know, I've been feeling queer all day—and the nurse does, too—restless, nervous, jumpy, that don't-know-what feeling. I blamed it on the monotonous menu, but it's only the moon, you think?"

No, he wouldn't concede that he thought anything about it.

"Then it hasn't affected you?"

"Nothing affects me, Madame, these days—not even stocks."

"Yes, but an eclipse is such a dear! And of all nights, tonight! Epatant! Something to remember always! Dinner in a hospital with—an eclipse. Why, it's *worth* an operation! . . . And isn't it just wonderful, Mr. Huggums, how they *do* give you everything in this blessed place!"

Henley called his hospital "half work-house and half-jail." Not this one! Here is the plaisance of Romance, her pet covert when bored by familiar quarry. . . . She had flushed some strange birds in

this preserve, but none quite so unexpected as the pair she had just brought down. Romance looked the twain over, puzzled but delighted; made sure neither was shamming; tucked them away in her game bag—and called it a day.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ON BREAD-PUDDING AND FREE EXPRESSION

**W**HAT would you like for dessert today, sir?  
There'll be bread-pudding on the trays."

"But that's tomorrow—Tuesday!" the patient gasped. "Bread-pudding's always Tuesday."

"Cook has shifted it to Mondays," Miss Savile announced—"for the sake of variety."

"But Monday is prune's day!"

"Cook has switched prunes to Thursday—for further variety."

Cartell's mind, inert from idleness, couldn't quite grasp it:

"Thursday's devoted to Brown-Betty—practically married. They've been inseparable since I've been here. Now to let prunes come between them like a—home-breaker! What's to become of her?"

"Goes over to Saturday—cook says—for additional variety."

"'Variety'? It's revolution! It might possibly work out with prunes, or even tapioca-Friday; but when cook tries turning bread-pudding into a sort



of Movable-Feast—as though it were a mere dainty instead of a hieratic institution——”

“Of course, sir, if you don’t care for the bread-pudding today——”

“O, I don’t mind,” Cartell interrupted with affected indifference.

“Of course not! And you wouldn’t say so if you *did* mind. Please, sir, don’t be so patient and considerate and resigned. ’Tisn’t fair to the nurse. Doesn’t give her a decent chance to develop the qualities she’ll need most. One learns a lot more from a case that is exacting, peevish and grouchy.—Don’t you ever swear, sir?”

“On Tuesdays—always. But, now, with the shift to the Monday menu——”

“No, sir!” she threatened. “You’ve had your last bread-pudding in this place!”

“I’ve dreamed of this moment, Miss Savile.”

“You should have told me so before.”

“I respect too much the ancient traditions of the institution.”

“You shouldn’t, sir, respect anything except your own impulse. All the best thought of the day is for free expression. No inhibitions. Helps a case a lot. Do, please, have what you like—do as you like—say what you like.—Think you’d like a Floating-Island?”

“I don’t mind. What is it?”

“Wait and see, sir. I’m supposed to be rather good on ‘Floating-Island.’ ”

Delmonico the First, Brillat-Savarin, Vatel—any cordon-bleu—could have learned something that day in the diet-kitchen. There are possibilities in whipped-cream, beaten-eggs, sifted flour, flaming sugar, vanilla, chocolate, grenadine, almond-paste, never dreamed of in their philosophy of sweets and kickshaws.

Miss Savile's patient was not the only one, apparently, to sniff indifference to bread-pudding; and the nurses sympathizing, were on their mettle. They didn't simply cook; they mixed in daring, imagination, invention, poetry. For the occasion, they were as great artists—taking bold chances in composition, not only with ingredients but with indigestion. Yet no patient suffered set-back. Audacity won as usual—and for the best of reasons, as you shall see.

Miss Beauclerc offered a sensation—"Coupe-Sans-Souci." She didn't claim it for her own; she'd had it, a few nights before, at a dinner-party and secured the recipe in writing from the secretive *chef*, on promise that it should be used only for the hospital. The precious slip was read aloud.

"Attractive," Miss Killarney agreed; "but according to that recipe your Souci 'takes a lot of sherry,' to pronounce the flavor,—doesn't it?"

"Depends on how you pronounce the 'Souci';—'oo' as in 'boo,' my dear, not 'ow' as in 'ouch'!"

"Any way you say it, you have no sherry.—My patient thinks he'd like a Lillian-Russell."

"He must be fully convalescent," the Bishop's

daughter observed. "They always ask the impossible."

"O, I could make it easy enough, only we don't have any cantaloupe."

"I could make a rum-omelet," Miss Morell discovered, "only we do have the Volstead Act."

"Don't bother with the 'Lillian,'" Miss Trenholm suggested. "Give him a Peach-Melba instead."

"Or a Lalla-Rookh."

"Or a Charlotte-Russe. That's what I'm making." Miss Morell held up to view a tall confection of Byzantine design.

"What! That wedding-breakfast? You'd never get by the State-Board with all that for one Charlotte-Russe!"

"It is though—Charlotte-Russe à la Kerensky. See how you like it."

Miss Gwinnett munched one of the petit-fours, a macaroon and two spoonfuls of the whip.

"Charlotte's very nice," she decided, "but her Russian friend is sort of—off-sky. Don't you think so, Trenny?"

Miss Trenholm was in a quandary of her own. Her patient, the Contessa, was exigeante in the matter of desserts—*tout-à-fait difficile*, she herself admitted. 'Bread-pudding was nothing in her young life.'

Today she rather thought she'd like—let's see—yes, Angel-food!—but no—after a glance at a silk-

covered hamper of bon-bons—an inspiration—Cherubs'-Dimples! Did Trenny know how to—but, no, of course not; they were quite new even to Paris: the latest fantaisie in patisserie. But she could give a very accurate idea to work on; something between Gateau-St. Honoré and Meringue-Panachée, or, possibly, Frangipani-a-l'Aphrodite.

Even with this information and a large dish of crystallized-fruits, sugared-rose-leaves, French nougat, Turkish paste and candied violets culled from the box of bon-bons, Miss Trenholm still had her doubts.

“Does this taste quite right?” she asked the company.

Miss Winston took a spoonful and, still uncertain, a second: “Trifle too much Sozodont,” she suggested, “but you try it,” and handed the dish to Miss De Lancey who, in turn, begged Miss Savile to taste her prune-soufflée.

“It looks most attractive!”

Miss Dalkeith objected:

“Nothing with prunes is ever attractive. A prune's the next thing to man that can't dance.”

“Wait 'till you see how I do these.”

“Only way to do a prune,” Miss Dalkeith insisted, “is to cremate it, and then drown the remains.”

“What's all that, Sandra?”

“Floating Island, of course.”

“‘Island!’—Why, child, you've got it beat into

an archipelago"—and having made free of the saffron sea and two or three fluffy islets, she passed it along to Miss Beauclerc who meanwhile had been reconciling Coupe-San-Souci to vanilla-extract instead of sherry, and now proudly submitted the product for judgment.

Miss Winthrop smacked approving lips: "Couldn't be better *with* sherry!" and passed the coupe to Miss Creighton who, disagreeing, thought it needed a soupçon of—of—then another swallow—*something*, and handed it on to the next juror who took half of what was left and thrust the remainder to Miss Condé.

The Bishop's daughter took no notice. Gazed abstractedly at the ceiling, her lips moving silently, her spoon stirring lackadaisically—until some one glancing into the dish exclaimed:

"O, look who's here—old Brown Betty!"

"Ti-tum-tiddy—Ti-tiddy-tum"—instantly echoed Miss Condé—beating ti-tum-tiddy and ti-tiddy-tum on the edge of the dish; put it aside; with a running jump perched herself on the window-sill and began scribbling wildly, reading aloud as the pencil scurried from line to line:—

Call the doctors—up and down!  
Betty Brown's in town.

Knives and saws and scissors jingle—  
Sets the internes all a-tingle!—  
Betty's young and sweet and single.

Cut her gently—save the pieces—  
Betty's pa is rich as Croesus.

Purr how needless her affright is—  
Looks like mumps or tonsilitis  
May be, only 'pendicitis.

Whatever's wrong, they soon will mend—fix—  
Tummy—tonsils—teeth—appendix.

Warn 'em: Mustn't let her feaze y'e  
She's a case to josh and tease y'e.  
Give her plenty anaesthesia.

Keep her there—take no chances  
Awake, she'll put you all in trances.

Down-of-eider, lace and roses  
Be the couch her form encloses—  
Like whereon Queen Mab reposes.

Gatch's-bed may do for bumpkins,  
Betty's folks are social pumpkins.

By this time the Floating-Island had finished its voyage, after having put in at many harbors, and giving toll at every port-of-call. Miss Morell—the last of these—released the empty craft to the owner.

“Lacks something, Sandra, but I don't think that'll hurt him.”

“I'm sure it won't—seeing what's left of it—a speck of the island, with nothing to float on.—And there's the bell—the trays are up!”

They filed sedately, though in panic haste, to the dumb-waiter, leaving Miss Morell to destroy the evidence of their dissipation.

“If Miss Beaux finds out”—they warned her—“after all those eggs and cream and sugar—we’ll all get bally-hoo.”

“And meanwhile,” Miss Morell called after, “the patients get bread-pudding.”

At sight of the dessert, Cartell placed two fingers on his left wrist.

“Stop that, sir!” Miss Savile cried: “You know you can’t take your own pulse.”

“I can when I look at bread-pudding.”

“’Tisn’t meant to ‘look at,’ sir, nor to measure pulse; but to *eat!*” Tartness, quite new for her, spiced the speech. “And it’s supposed to be rather sedative.”

“Ah! That’s where it deceives you, Miss Savile. Beneath that mild, listless exterior, there’s something madly exciting about bread-pudding; slow but cumulative, acervatingly cumulative. And that’s been going on, now, seven weeks. Nearly two months of bread-pudding! After that, a frog could take his own pulse.”

Her only protest was to recite:

“Bread-pudding is abundantly rich in calories, especially with a modicum of raisins—like that one. Dietitians all mention it—warmly.”

“It deserves it—very warmly,” he agreed with fervor. “But they approach the Pudding solely from a corporeal angle. They overlook the psychology of the stuff—the complex of the mushy mess

—made all the more dubious by that masquerade of Muscatels. And flagrantly so when the patient's fancy has been set a-roaming on a Floating Island."

Miss Savile looked quite miserable.

"I don't mind, of course," he hurried on, "and I wouldn't speak of it, only you *insist* on 'free expression.'"

"I am sorry, sir, but something happened to the Floating Island."

"Earth-quake or typhoon?"

"More like a famine, sir. I foolishly sent it on a Cook's Tour—in the diet-kitchen—and they ate it off the map."

"Must have been attractive"—glaring, still more recusant, at the soggy interloper.

"Now please don't make me send that down, intact. Cook will feel dreadfully hurt. If you won't eat it *I'll* have to, myself, and I've had a very trying morning. Somehow, everything goes wrong to-day."

He couldn't help but enjoy her distress for a moment. She was exquisitely pretty so; her eyes blinking, dewy under the frown, her thin, cool lips yielding, with a flush, to the pout.

Ineptly, though intending kindly, he said: "Miss Newlands wouldn't take it so tragically—the Pudding."

"Miss Newlands is a graduate-nurse. They can do as they jolly well like. Send down the whole tray untouched and unexplained to cooks, patients



or phys—puddings. And I rather think if Miss Newlands were here now in my place, you *would* eat that.”

He sighed compliance and reached for the dish, to start his meal.

“But that’s your dessert, sir!”

“Today we’ll have it hors-d’oeuvre.”

“What for?”

“Variety!” he growled. “Cook can’t object to that!”

She eyed him anxiously.

“This is a new mood for you, sir. What does it mean?”

“Additional variety.”

Morosely, but scrupulously, he disassociated the raisins from the rest; arranged them, taking care and time, in a circle about the edge. Then, suddenly brightening:

“Miss Savile—there’s the makings here of a noble poultice!”

“Do you feel the need of a poultice—anywhere?”

“Yes! *Anywhere*—except internally.”

Disdaining the challenge, she gave the pudding the air, seriously, on the outer window-sill. Whereat, or in trice thereof, arose a clamor of peeps, cheeps, chirps and twitters; a ruffle, whirr and flutter; scores of sparrows, all fuss-and-feathers, flew self-invited to the feast; hovered over—around—about. But for some reason held off, suspicious, sniffy, fearful. Ogled the dulce at every angle,

flicked it with wing and tail, pecked and dabbed at it—but instantly recoiling, as if from electric shock, after the tiniest possible bill-touch. And always a babel of opinions, comparisons, arguments, warnings.

Now the pudding was not of the nurse's making nor election. Yet for the birds thus to twit it, figuratively turning up their noses and actually their tails, hurt her to the quick. Such was their pride of the Hospital: so sensitive of anything that touched its greatness from clinic to kitchen.

Her slight figure, interposed at the window, failed to hide the raree-show. With a whispered Scat! and a hand-wave she shooed the sparrows off—but no farther than the balustrade. There, droop-eyed, owl-like, they lined up in silent assize—excepting only one particularly obstreperous cock-sparrow. He stood to his post and the pudding; took a beakful, with air *à l'outrance!*—gulped—gagged—spat it out—tilted contemptuous tail skyward and fled the scene, the flock following.

“Silly fool—the birds, I mean, sir. Did you see their insulting capers?—What do you suppose got into them?”

“Well, for one thing,” he gloated, “no bread-pudding!”

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE UNSUSPECTED POTENCY OF MRS. HUGGINS' UKULELE

AS the days went on Room 54 became a storm-centre. The getting-out of Mr. Huggins ceased to be a breezy jest: it took on the import of a major-operation. Kreweson, the house-physician, discussed it with his associates over the midnight supper. Miss Beaux, the superintendent—a pillar of patience by temperament: a symbol of serenity by training—betrayed nerves. The Captain foresaw relief only in a writ-of-eviction and constable. The nurses'-bench whispered the possibilities of a boycott. The diet-kitchen buzzed with plans of a food-blockade. In scores of ways he came to know that his room was needed, sorely needed, for cases that couldn't wait. But Huggins stayed on.

Thereby the theory of thought-waves got a jolt and set-back. They swirled and raged about his door like a Kansas cyclone; but Huggins sat tight, unmoved, even to the batting of an eye-lash. If conscious of the storm, he gave no sign, except to eat more chops and drink more orange-juice.

Apparently, the man was without feeling of any sort. Harley, the dressing-surgeon, had remarked it from the first, with amaze and amusement. A probe, that even under Harley's light and lenient hand struck most patients with the force of a deep-sea dredger, merely tickled Huggins; a clamp of fiendish efficiency—"Big Kelly"—a cruel-only-to-be-kind device that most patients winced to look-upon—Huggins minded no more than the finish-file of the manicure. When the dressing-wagon rumbled out, even strong men asked only drawn-curtains and sleep. Huggins asked for orange-juice and *The Financial Chronicle*.

Today he was to get the Hospital's ultimatum. Dr. Kreweson sought to soften the decree by thumping the patient, resoundingly, at vital points of the body; by compliments on his appetite, color, vigor, bubbling spirits, general condition——

Bah! They couldn't tell him his condition! 'Operating on mighty small margin.' He knew what the end would be. He was resigned to close the account—since the Lord willed it—but, damn-it, he wouldn't be pushed!

"Now that you've had your fun out of the operation, seems you've lost all interest in the case."

"Nonsense, Mr. Huggins."

"Looks to me, Doctor, as though you didn't want me to die in the house."

"You do just as you please about that, sir—go or

stay as long as you like. But you are looking the picture of health, sir," Kreweson complained.

"You think so, eh? Well, I'll tell you how I look: I wired my broker yesterday to sell my stocks at the market, and now I've sent for my pastor. I guess you know what that means!"

Doctor Kreweson, boiling within, remained chilly. He didn't warm even when Huggins intimated that he meant to do something for the Hospital: kind o' felt that his last days were passing here—that the end was nearer than the doctors knew—that the only thing that kept him going was the orange-juice.—Yes, he *would* like a glass right now!—and when it was all over the Board-of-Directors would thank the nurse for urging him to remain to the finish.

Miss Condé withered under the lightning glance of the superintendent; but, of course, she couldn't contradict the patient—under Rule III of the Nurse's Primer.

"Where can I go, if I leave here," he demanded, "in my condition?"

He'd do very well, they told him, at the Seven-oaks Tavern—in the pine-woods just beyond the Park. "You can see it from the Porch, on a clear day. Many of our patients go there to convalesce."

"But—that's where people go to dance!" He looked to Miss Condé for corroboration.

"You won't have to dance, sir," she stammered.

“But I’ll have to see others doing it,” he countered—“and in my condition!”

“Well, then—Atlantic City,” the doctor ordered desperately.

“‘Atlantic City?’ ” he bellowed. “You’d send me to that robbers’-roost—to—to—starve to death?”

“You’ll find plenty there to eat—all kinds of places.”

“No, sir—only two kinds of places! In one you get ‘stung’—and in the other indigestion. I’ll leave it to you, nurse?”

Miss Condé ventured, evasively, that she had heard the sea-food commended.

“Quite so,” he agreed—“that’s their long suit—sea-food—and pastry. And that’s ’bout all the restaurants care to serve—tarts and lobsters. No, thank you—not in my condition!”

Beaten again, the house-physician, followed by the superintendent, withdrew to the hall.

Presently, the pastor arrived: a man of rosy-gills, twinkling eyes, and full, round paunch; in rusty Prince-Albert; shoes well-polished but broken, shabby; collar spotless but frayed. From all of which one might fairly guess a rural parish, and his tithe paid in kind instead of coin.

He introduced himself with a chuckle: “Michael Huggins,”—and, still chuckling, his wife—“naturally enough, Mrs. Huggins.”

A little, bird-like woman; decidedly sparrowy, in her brown taffeta; a voice that peeped and chirped and yet challenged: a general port of up-and-at-'em—not peevish, nor fractious, nor naggy, but frankly belligerent, in arms against the world, the flesh and the devil—of which, she felt in her woman's-heart, she and her husband had not gotten their fair share. All in all, an extremely rare specimen of the clergyman's wife—in fiction: but in actual fact, no dodo-bird.

She held, anxiously, a cash-and-carry bag of green chintz; half as long as herself; might hide a leg-of-mutton. Instead, it hid a box-of-tricks fateful as Pandora's.

Doctor Kreweson was quick to tell them that they would find the patient greatly improved—perfectly well, indeed—so that he really ought to be out of the Hospital, long ago,—and they must so advise their brother.

“Not *my* brother,” the lady twittered: “no blood-kin of mine at all—though we all love Abner. He's my husband's brother. But they're as different—he and Mike—as clams and crullers—not meaning to reflect in any way on clams,” she chirped, kindly: “'cause we all love Abner.—Better go to him, Mike.”

Alone with the pastor's wife, Miss Beaux begged her to urge Mr. Huggins' departure; he was in danger of melancholia here, from brooding over

his case. . . . "For instance, he keeps a precise record, the nurse tells us, of everything he eats."

"And drinks," Mrs. Michael added. "He showed my husband the account last time he called here. Also bills-of-fare from three or four of the fashionable hotels and restaurants."

"Yes, he had the nurse fetch them; said they might help his appetite.

"And they *do* help—when he compares what he'd have to pay restaurants for what he gets here. He's put it all down in that precise record of his diet, every item of every meal. 'Celery 50 cents; chicken-broth 45 cents; two chops 90 cents; mashed potatoes 35 cents; hearts-o'-lettuce 50 cents; ice-cream 35 cents.' And as for the orange-juice—he showed Michael whole pages of his account-book—made out of the Hospital's letter-paper, you'll find—covered with ditto-dots and x's, and he's figured-out by algebra that at the restaurants—or even soda-fountains—his orange-juice alone would cost him as much per day as his room-rent here. And in those places, Abner's figured, he couldn't be sure it was the real thing, like he gets here, or more likely some of that patent 'orange-crush' stuff that's advertised in the magazines.

"O, but he's made up for it, he *says*, in his will. And you-all here will be astonished when you find what he's done for the Hospital. Abner's careful of his money, but when it comes to charity and helping folks, he goes the limit. You'll probably find



that he's bequeathed you as much as a dozen oranges and, maybe, one of those glass juice-squeezers from the 10-cent store.

"When it comes to doing good with his millions, Abner thinks no more of giving a nickel than most folks would of five cents. When our church is in dire need of a subscription my husband will never let his brother head the list; he's afraid Abner's example will lead the rest of the parish into recklessness. We all love Abner, but the only way to get his room—that you all need so badly—is to double his rent, same as he's done with *his* tenants. Or cut down his oats—and charge him war-tax on the orange-juice—same as the soda-fountains. The shock might give him a fatal relapse: but you'd have him out of here, one way or another. Meanwhile, I'll try to brighten him up."

Something in her swing of the chintz-bag prompted Miss Beaux to observe that Mr. Huggins, in certain regards, had been most considerate; wouldn't have a graduate nurse, knowing they were particularly scarce at present and some patient might need her more than he did; said he'd worry along with the student-nurses.

"Yes, that's like Abner! He'd give up his seat in Heaven, if it cost any more than standing-room."

By now the sparrow-complex had ceased to twitter. This last shot fairly crackled with temper. In her meeting with Abner, 'in his condition,' Miss

Beaux sensed a clash and sought to interpose some gentling thought.

“Mr. Huggins, perhaps, is merely eccentric rather than careful,” she offered desperately: “We are told, for instance, he was one of the first and largest contributors to the Prohibition Fund.”

“Quite so!” The assent was ominously eager. “And the day *before* that he bought a controlling interest in the hardest soft-drink on the market—mostly dope, Michael warns his Sunday-school. And the day *after* Prohibition took effect, the ‘popular’ chain-café of which Abner is a large and beloved stock-holder raised their cup of coffee from five cents to ten—whereby Abner marched several parasangs toward getting back his donation.”

Miss Beaux let her go.

As Huggins wheeled on to the Porch, followed by his pastor, some one started, cheerily, the customary—“You’re look——”

“Yes, yes,” he assented, “and that’s how I feel—like Billy-be-damned! And I look it, too!—So do some other people I could mention, only it’s ’gainst the rules here.” Mr. Huggins always conformed to the code of the Club, but construed it peculiarly.

After that outbreak he took what spiritual comfort he could from his chuckling brother and then dispatched him on several errands for which he would ordinarily have to pay messenger-service.

And Michael chuckled at the thought that was why Abner had sent for him. His wife had said several times during the journey to town that they'd find it was something like that!

From the screen of the *Chronicle*, the Mogul scanned the Porch long and anxiously. Then to his nurse:

"Is the Countess feeling worse, today?"

Miss Condé couldn't say.

"But—she's always been out here about this time?"

After studying her wrist watch intently, Miss Condé ventured:

"Yes, sir."

"Hadn't you better go ask her nurse if——"

"Miss Trenholm is away on leave, sir."

"Then who's looking after the lady?"

Miss Condé didn't know.

This man was familiar with secretiveness. He was an "inside" director of several corporations that never told their stockholders anything except where to send their proxies and assessments. But compared to these tight-lipped nurses the Rockefellers, Morgans and Garys of his experience were magpies of dicacity.

Hitherto the Mogul had been callous to Miss Condé's reserve; now it rasped him to the raw: "Please go and ask the Countess how she's feeling—for *me*, say."

The nurse shook her head regretfully but firmly.

"We are not permitted, sir, to discuss such personal matters with patients. And, besides,"—just as though it didn't matter—"the Countess Bianchi has left the Hospital."

A long, deep breath beat the rustle of his trembly newspaper.

"Not gone for good?" he barked.

"We all hope so. She's so terribly attractive.—But wouldn't you like some orange-juice?"

"No!" For the first time he realized the tameness of such liquor in a real emergency. . . . Gone! and he, too, with an indescribable sinking feeling, a panic of emptiness that he could liken only to that awful day of the "corner" in Stutz Motor and he "short" a thousand shares.

The possibility of such a disaster as love falling upon him had always seemed as remote as a—a—well, as a dividend on his Wabash Common. In all his years of flush health, he had kept out of *that* market, shy even of the Kerb—and now, in his condition, 'way below par, just out of the hands of the Great Receiver—now, when by all the rules of the game he should be immune.

He knew when he came here that an operation, any operation, even the waggish appendix, is always a bit chancy. Mrs. "Mike," the clergyman's wife, had cited several cases within her personal knowledge that had actually walked off the table unassisted after just such an operation as his and then succumbed to "shock" or "complications" or "heart

failure"; and of course every joemiller of his acquaintance had told him to 'look out for those pretty nurses.' But no one had warned him against this sort of thing.

After a time he managed to inquire:

"When'd she go?"

Miss Condé couldn't say.

"But—somebody must know."

No comment.

"But how could she go so—suddenly?"

"Must have been discharged, sir."

"'Discharged!'" The word in this technical sense was new to Huggins and baffled him. "You don't mean to say she was—discharged?"

"Why, of course, sir," she said, quite gayly as if it were something of a joke. Which Huggins thought peculiarly heartless in a Bishop's daughter and in his condition.

Huggins related all human affairs to finance. So his first thought of the lady's abrupt departure—'discharged!'—he had snarled it often at employees but never till now sensed its ferocity—flew to that for cause. She had mentioned, delicately, her unruly stocks, shrinking bonds, her two foreign husbands and her enforced retreat to the country. All of which hinted to Huggins a bad Bank-Statement for the dear creature, and tight money.

He yearned to question Miss Condé: 'Had there been any trouble about meeting her assessments here?'—meaning, of course, her weekly bills. But

he dreaded the answer: 'Really couldn't say, sir,' in a clear undertone of 'wouldn't if I could.'

Then a sudden sense of part-guilt in the ugly business impelled him to ask meekly:

"Anything to do with the dinner?"

As to that Miss Condé would only generalize: "Miss Trenholm never allows her patients any indiscretions."

Huggins resented the insinuation. "The Countess doesn't need any such looking after," he retorted gallantly; but he thought possibly the authorities had found fault with the dinner brought from outside—and the porch—and the moon and—so on.

From the nurse's silence and stare of vacuity there might be no such thing in Nature as a dinner, a porch, or even a moon.

Huggins plunged into a study of the stock-list and emerged with an idea. "The Countess had consulted me about her investments. I must get in touch with her at once, I see——" tapping the *Chronicle*. "You will please ask the office where she's gone."

"It's against the rules, sir, to make such inquiries about another nurse's patient."

"Bah! More rules here than the Dutch Stock Exchange!"

In that temper he greeted his sister-in-law—curtly, frappishly; but mellowed at sight of the chintz-bag.

“Have you brought me some food?” he asked.

She smiled adnvently: “The choicest I could think of, Abner.” She drew it out, opened it at the book-mark, and in confidential tone began Gray’s “Elegy in a Country Church-Yard.” The other patients elaborately disregarded what was apparently a family-affair, until the reader’s voice rising with the tide of the poet’s emotions *demande*d notice from the entire Porch personally and collectively, that “the paths of Glory lead but to the Grave.”

Mrs. Michael bowed her thanks for the stunning silence that applauded her recital—and reached in the bag for the encore.

“Some of you may have heard this, but I’m sure dear Abner hasn’t. I think it’s kind o’ purty.” And she read them Alan Seegar’s exquisite ‘Rendezvous with Death’: read it with obvious effect, visible and audible.

The Veiled Lady turned her back to the reader, pulled up the silken coverlet to her shoulders, drew her kimono collar up to her ears, buried her head in the pillow and yielded frankly to her emotion; silently, but every sob betrayed by the palpitating kimono, and each sob growing in violence until the roll-chair threatened to slip its moorings.

Appreciation could go no farther. And Mrs. Michael, exultant, reached in the chintz bag for her trump-card, saying “at home we use the concertina for this song; but it’s kind of unhandy to carry; I

guess you-all can get the chord from this." And she twanged the ukulele.

At the familiar tinkle, the Veiled Lady emerged from shelter only to disappear when—boom!—Mrs. "Mike" began "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

She sang—in stunning contrast with her speaking pipes—a barytone of deepest purple; no profound contralto; but honest, forth-right barytone—of the timbre that Cartell hadn't heard—nor anyone else—since May Yohe used to thunder:

*You do not love me—no!  
Kiss me good-bye and go!*

with such sombre thrill, such direct personal appeal, seemingly, to every man in the audience, that you were tempted to stand up, coram publico, and protest: 'No, no—you're wrong!—Take 'back those cruel words.' So that it was a real kindness to her myriad admirers when Miss Yohe finally exchanged the cheers of the gallery for the coronet of the Newcastles.

That was the timbre of Mrs. Huggins!

There was no denying the appeal of her performance, and slight resisting. One patient after the other hid his sobs in a verse of the matchless threne. Even Cartell and Varrey and Skethway, the jockey, who confided later to his nurse that he couldn't sing for sour apples.—But it was submerged in the rich diapason that swept the Porch under the spell of Mrs. "Mike."

And when she'd got the ukulele going full-tilt,



plunked and plectroned into quavering vibrance, you had the contrapuntal effect of a 'cello duet by Hans Kindler and Pablo Casals, with an obligato by the Six Brown Brothers on their saxophones.

Down the corridor came the hurried tap-tap-tap of rubber-soles and the swish of starched skirts. The half-score nurses slowed at the door, approached their respective patients without the faintest show of excitement—and shoved a thermometer into their respective mouths, with the usual injunction to shut their respective lips. Then followed forthwith a swift trundling of Gatch-beds and roll-chairs from the verandah back to the rooms.

“We stood for old Mr. Gray’s Elogy in the Church-yard and for her purty ‘Rendezvous with Death,’ ” Miss Savile explained to her patient, “but when she began ‘Nearer, my God’—well—you-all out there have been near enough lately, without her shoving you any further with a heathen zing-zing. I’m not particularly pious—not half as much as I ought to be—and I hope I’m not finicky, but that is *not* the sort of hymn that goes with a ukulele!”

Mrs. Huggins, alone with her husband’s brother, went straight on, never raising her eyes from the ukulele nor lowering a note of her saxophonic voice; not even when a dreadful clangor echoing through the halls, louder and more insistent than the emergency-call in the silence of the night, brought Miss Condé on a run.

"Please, Mr. Huggins, *please!*" the nurse entreated, taking the bell from him. "The patients will think it's a fire."

"There'll be an earth-quake, if this happens again."

"It won't, Mr. Huggins, never again, while you're here," the nurse assured him.

"No! Not while I'm here! 'Cause I'm leaving *now*—soon as I get packed up—"

"But this is most irregular, sir. You must wait for Dr. Kreweson—and he'll 'discharge' you properly."

"He needn't trouble to 'discharge' me, tell him: I've resigned."

And he jumped from his wheel-chair, strode toward his room, calling back: "Have 'em make out my bill—to date!"

He had it within twenty minutes; paid it at the office—and was told the taxi was waiting for him.

"'Taxi'?" he roared, "What for?"

"To take you to the railroad station."

"What's the idea? Don't the street-cars go to the depot any more? Or maybe there's a strike, eh? —If I'm well enough to leave here—as you all say—I guess I'm strong enough to use the street-car. Or I should be strong enough, if I had a little orange-juice."

While he drank it, with frowns and puckers as though it were a bitter dose, the ambulance-surgeon

came in for final instructions regarding a case he was to fetch from the railroad-station.

"The patient arrives at three-o'clock," Miss Beaux announced, "on the train from New York."

"That's my train to the South," Huggins interposed; "leaves three-ten. I'll ride to the depot with you."

Against the rules, they objected.

"Rules, nonsense! I'll pay for it. The Hospital might as well get the seven cents as the traction-company."

Without more ado he stamped out of the door, threw his kit-bag aboard, and climbed in.

Thus the Grand Mogul did for himself, thriftily, on his triumphal journey back to Anne Arundel.

On arrival there he learned, to his stupefaction, that the estate adjoining his own had been taken for the Summer by an Eytalian Princess from Muskogee.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE SWAN-SONG OF "BIG KELLY": ACCOMPANIST, DOCTOR HARLEY

**G**IVE me the man," cries the sage, "who sings at his work."<sup>1</sup>

Harley, the dressing-surgeon, was of that quality. Usually, of course, his song was sotto-voce; frequently, a mere hum or a whispered whistle or a confidential deedle-dum-deedle-dum. But always he tempered the terrors of his ministrations with some pretty tune.

For a period of his youth, it seems, he inclined to grand-opera; studied for it.—There were times when Cartell wished he'd gone through with it.—His mind still moved in melody, and in his obedient hand clamp, probe and drain answered the musical impulse. Even the adhesive tautened to a "Yeo, heave, ho!" Scultetis tightened to a pirate's chantey.

It got into the dressing-wagon—this musical complex of Harley's; made sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, or deep-tolling chimes, of the knives and

<sup>1</sup> Never sang at his own work! Croaked, roared, and bellowed.

scissors, tubes, pans and bottles and all the paraphernalia of pain.

At times the dread machine came rolling to the door with the rumble of the tumbril in the Reign of Terror. And the surgeon, choosing the probe, would most likely chirp "A Hundred Fathoms {Deep." Again, it struck a livelier note in Harley—some merry arietta of musical-comedy or, at the worst, the Toreador's song. Today it came a-frolic: steel and crystal all a-tinkle and a-jingle in a wild fantasia of triumph—and Harley whistling the Barcarolle of Contes d'Hoffmann.

"Farewell appearance of 'Big Kelly' today," he announced, as he took the rough-neck clamp from the nurse and squirmed it to the sticking-point,—*legato—moderato*. "I'm sure you don't feel that?"—jab, *fortiore-spiritoso*.

"S—slightly," the patient stammered.—"Gee-whiz!"

"Yes, Kelly's about through his engagement here"—another jab, *forte—staccato*.

"Great-Scott! Doctor!!"

"Soft pedal, please, on the applause!"—jab—jab—*scherzando—capriccioso*.

"Christopher Co-lum—bus!"

"His tour's nearly finished"—jab—jab—jab—*andante—allegro—allegretto*.

"Whew!—Jump—ing—Jupiter!"

"Let him jump.—*You* lie quiet—'til I'm through here"—jabs—*maestoso—fortissimo—furioso*.

“Swear, if you like, sir,” the nurse encouraged.

“Suf—fer—ing—Cats!—I beg your pardon, Miss Savile.”

“That’s quite all right, sir. Dr. Harley doesn’t mind?”

“No! Let her go! Shows vitality”—thrust *robusto*—“reserve-strength”—jab *feroce*, with a particularly merry deedle-dum-deedle——

“Holy smoke!”

“Much better swear than”—poke *glissicando*—“groan and whimper”—scrape *giubilando*——

“Cæsar’s ghost!”

“Soon be done, sir.”

“Yes, in a few minutes, now—fifteen or twenty”—jabs—*presto*—*prestissimo*——

The patient, off-guard, moaned—*profundo*——

“Mute the ‘cello, please, Miss Savile. Gets on my nerves!”

The nurse flew to obey: gagged him gently with a kerchief drenched in cologne.

“Last number on the programme”—*recitativo*—“unless you insist on an encore”—jabs—*diminuendo*—*rallentando*.

“Hell’s-bells!” rang faintly through the gag.

“Concert’s over!”—*cadenza*—*vivace*.

“Thank you—*pianissimo*—doctor”—*affettuoso*.

“Thanks, rather, to this good old Kelly—and Carrel-Dakin—who’s been working *con amore*!—And—some—neat—performance! That Peruvian-

Balsam, too, regular symphony!—What—Miss Savile?”

“Yes, sir—most attractive!”

She reached for the deep-dredging clamp, but Harley withheld it. With a file he scratched on the handle a mark of identification. “Keep track of that Kelly,” he said: “He’s a tough party, but he’s lucky.—Now the bouquets, Miss Savile.”

And while he frivolled vocally with MacDowell’s “Water-Lily” from a white wand, no thicker than a pencil, fell a shower of fluffy petals, light and pure as snow-flakes. A Hoppe-like twist of Sandra’s wrist wafted them, in a cloud, to the surgeon. He beamed approval: “One of the best things you do, young lady.”

Then, to the patient:

“Everything’s going fine! (Deedle-dum-deedle-dum.) We’ve had a lot of luck in this case (deedle-dum)—from the very first.”

The patient gasped his gratitude for the constant care he’d had—devotion—the enormous skill.

“Yes, yes, but every case has that—of course; but, sometimes, hang it, there’s no luck! Things go wrong—no matter what we do. Why, even in this case, with all our luck, there were a few days there when—well——” and, reminiscently, he fell to humming as he worked, “O, Bury Bartholomew out in the Woods.”

“It’s like a horse”—he resumed—“trained to the minute—in easy company—going strong—into first

money—and then throwing a shoe or picking up a pebble in the last furlong. Or, maybe, just ‘quitting.’ In perfect form but out of luck.” And he went on to speak of Luck—openly, not fearing—despite Cartell’s sign of caution—silence—lest *they* hear: the myriad imps of mischance always waiting about, to turn the laugh on mortals when they get too gay and confident.

One heard the word often, from these men of science. They made no bones of their belief in Chance.

They spoke of luck as of an actual force in nature: not as a mere phrase or figure, myth or superstition, but as a vital agent for good or evil, like fire and water—only vastly more potent and cryptic. Precaution, care, skill, the last coup of science and invention—might not prevail against bad luck; not genius itself and Carrel-Dakin. They seemed to share Frothingham’s conviction<sup>1</sup> that “Luck is simply untraced, and thus far untraceable law.”—

A law that lynches, at times, with no more than a pin-scratch, a speck of dust, a draught through the key-hole, a tainted thread in the snowy gauze, a halting blood-drop—any one of a myriad nothings that make a joke of the supreme and solemn courts of science.

Even Fenway—super-man among his kind—Cartell had heard acknowledge Luck and her baffling

<sup>3</sup> Vide: “Religions of Humanity.”



mystery; one horrid night, when the fickle lady was showing a bit of cold shoulder and lots of tempera-  
ture.

A particularly ingenious imp had wriggled its way through the cordon of Carrel-Dakin, peroxide and what not of septic aversions. No bones were made of it.

“When d’ you first——?” Fenway completed the query with some of the customary pantomime of nods, glances, passes-of-the-hand.

The dressing-surgeon timed his first discovery, adding with proud enthusiasm:

“Everything was quite attractive until——”

“H’m h’m,” applauded Fenway: “And that’s where it is, eh?”

The dressing-surgeon confirmed the locality, with a rather faint “Yes, sir.”

“H’m, h’m,—— Why didn’t you try the saline solution?”

The patient listened tensely for the reply; he sensed, too, the interest of the group about his bed.

“Never thought of it, sir,” said Harley—which was frank at least.

Through all this the patient’s eyes stared fixedly at the ceiling, preferring to evade the significance of the scene: but now they turned to face Fenway’s fateful retort:

“H’m, h’m,” was his only comment, and of yore-ish tone; but then a quick “H’m h’m,” repeated, in a tone quite new that implied: ‘Well, my lad, from

the *looks* of things, I guess you've spilled the beans and smashed the apple cart' . . . Aloud he advised Harley: "Get busy."

That *is* the limit! the patient is thinking. To have come through that ordeal of fire and steel upstairs, to have beaten that hundred-to-one chance, and then to be nosed-out, at the very finish, by a miserable little misbegotten bacillus of an added-starter whose entry no one had suspected——

"This will happen, now and then," Fenway says. "Despite every precaution and care, we can't make sure against it. We'll beat it, finally, but this sort of thing will turn up, now and then. Can't tell why: seems just a matter of luck."

That from Fenway! Who worked with Faith—who believed profoundly that Guidance directed his hand and eye; that every marvel he wrought was by Faith alone. And who never could understand how Hampden, his closest professional associate, with whom he worked in twin-brotherhood—his very complement—and yet who was frankly materialistic, bowing only to pure Science: devoting his great gifts to the service of man with the spirit of a zealot but trusting utterly in the prowess that was his by chance and study and experience.

Dr. Fenway couldn't understand that ever—Miss Savile was telling the patient,—until, one day, after some happy stroke of their complement, he burst out delighted, clapping his colleague on the shoulder:

"There, Hampden, now I've solved it!—I see it

clearly. You *have* the Faith, man,—but you don't know it!"

So you see—the tone of her telling implied—there is something besides Luck!

The journey-back—the unimagined, incredible, impossible return! There, in all reverence, is the Great Adventure. Rarer far than that other—the journey-out—richer of surprise, ineffably fairer of goal, stranger in wonders——

To lift the bitter draught of Lethe to the lips and find it turn to wine by the miracle of man's skill; the inky waters of Oblivion magic to crystal Lindaraxa. . . . To grope and stumble to the end of the dank road—the very edge of the pool where stands the greedy, insatiate Ferryman, sable-armored, poker-faced, hand outstretched for his toll—and then to be halted, turned back, the pilgrimage reversed, by a compact, sturdy figure in tweeds—*there* begins the Great Adventure. . . . Death is the common-place. Life is the miracle. The one plays with loaded dice: the sure-thing gambler: the odds offered, a sardonic jest. The skill that wins against such chances must needs have something of divinity. . . .

Slow, the return—weeks and months; labored, tricky, strewn with springe and pitfall, mischance quick and cunning to trip, nature's deviltries dogging every step. But, now, every step guided, guarded,

heartened: coaxed and beckoned onward as the child is taught to walk.

Never impatience, nor even boredom. Smiles at every turn, sweet-voices, watch that never wearies day or night, ceaseless care—again as for a child—a show of personal concern akin to friendship, to affection even, or its welcome counterfeit. ‘Part of the job!’ Yes, perhaps, but the artistic workmanship!—the grace and cunning of it.—You might think Yvette Guilbert taught them their ‘Good morning, sir’—the way they say it; like the invitation of L’Allegro. You come to count it a joyous station in The Great Adventure.

And so their ‘Good night—pleasant dreams, sir!’—not a mere trite courtesy, a euphemism for good-riddance; but a regretful adieu; like the refrain of a serenade. ‘Part of the job!’ Yes, yes—but it helps. . . .

Then the wonder-day of the journey! The trail grown easier, surer. A far glimpse, at times, of the clearing beyond. . . .

No longer a mere case:—“that man in ‘73’.” Colleague, now, collaborateur! One of them! Had a hand in the job! They tell you so; make you believe it—almost. “You worked along with us. That means a.lot.”

You can’t but smile, denying. ‘Worked along with us’—when you’ve merely drifted along, passive, helpless, often indifferent; the mind utterly

vacant except for an obsessing sense of confidence in the genius of these men, to which you hold by some queer subliminal assertion of—you don't know what. Beyond that you've done nothing. And that, of course, you haven't done consciously. But they insist that 'you worked along.'

And it helps—that attitude of theirs. A will does, somehow, insinuate, or a longing, not to disappoint them—their skill and zeal of service—something more than professional—and their seeming certainty of a 'darn good job.' (Kreweson, the house-physician, is violently sanguine, almost savage. He needs the room. That is among the earliest clear-cut impressions after the ether wears off: Kreweson's ceaseless quest of the room.) . . . You've seen them smile broadly—trade jolly augur-winks—over the bounding record. Heard their exultant chuckles—'H'm! H'm!—Well! Well!—What do you know about that!'—as they survey the clean-knitting stab. . . .

The nurses, too, they dislike to lose a case—no matter what you hear. That student-nurse, especially—worn to a wraith over the case—shabby to disappoint her. . . . And you'd like a chance some day to know her better—when you've had a hair-cut and a regular shave, a collar on and no more entre-nous sponge-baths. You *would* like to live until those disconcerting dabs become a dim remembrance. . . . It all helps.

Nothing so thrills a patient as the final exit of "Big Kelly," with his crew of wreckers, plumbers and riveters. To Harley he might image a basso-profundo; to Cartell he loomed always as a big, burly, Boss contractor. Done, now, his rough work: drawn his last pay of groans soft-pedalled, and torture crunched to whimpers. In sheer joy of it the patient laughs nervously, almost childishly. He'd like to shout or sing or—celebrate somehow!

"There are services in the chapel at eleven o'clock," the nurse suggests quite casually. "You'll be fully rested by then.—The change of scene might be pleasant for you."

"Yes, of course, but——"

"And good chance to show Dr. Fenway how you've gotten on. He's sure to be there. And we all think he rather likes to see his patients in the chapel."

Never till now, it struck Cartell, had he heard one word of religion; seen none of the conventional tokens of piety. Less, indeed, than confronts you in the modern hotel where, always, you surprise the badly-printed, virgin bible consorting on the dresser with the menus of club-breakfasts and the pink laundry-list.

And yet the place was essentially religious, frankly sectarian; candid, close, haughty as a Chinese-wall, from the name-stone over the door to the silent ban against factors of possible friction in the student-

house. That was the manner of B. M. H.—human as the Blue-Book. And there it ended—at the social gate for the nurses. Beyond, the spirit of divinity ruled; the human gave way to humanity. Every portal quick to open—to cross, crescent, ark or idol. With no catechism of creed, race or station. The single sesame, suffering: the watch-word, service.

But never spoken—the words. Nor their cognates; duty, humanity, mission, higher-call: nor any cant of martyrdom.

There may have been—probably, in that diverse company—some girls who obeyed the urge of religion and sacrifice; but with no pose or gesture of conscious virtue. It was as if a code, unwritten, unthought of, forbade hint of priggishness or unction. Good taste abjured it as bad style. It didn't go with blue-gingham—any more than a pink hair-ribbon. Simply, wasn't being done.—That was the morale of the place.

Had you put it so to these nurses they'd have wondered what-on-earth you were talking about! Nothing so bumptious as a *morale* in their philosophy. At least, they weren't conscient of it. No more than of the suave voice, the light tread, a quality of unstudied gentleness, a cast of thought and sentiment eternal-feminine, a manner of deference—survival of pristine womanhood—that made them seem of a different race.

Or, possibly, only of a different time. They wore their spiritual graces with native ease, unconscious

habit—just as they spoke the English of Jane Austen, played the horses, revered the ancient fame of mint-juleps, and used the “sir” and “ma’am” of antique courtesy that youth, elsewhere, discards, even at the snippy age, as shibboleth of servility.



## CHAPTER XXI

### SPRING IN TINICUM MEWS

**B**EYOND the scant gardens of the hospital, across a lane of a street, bloomed Tinicum Mews—the May-fair of Afric fashion; houses trim-kept as those of any color of similar station, and more picturesque: flower-boxes at the windows and, frequently, a canary-cage.

From one house, a victrola tenored:—“You’re Mighty Lak’ a Rose.” Against the jamb of the open door languored a young mulatta: tall, lithe, supple, leopard-sleek, in the regnant costume of the country; skirt of black charmeuse, cut high: georgette waist, cut low: patent-leather pumps and—bobbed hair!

She stood listless, gazing into space, oblivious of the song within, the shouting children hop-scotching on the pavement, the rival belles coquetting on neighbor door-steps, the screeching white cock-a-too in a wicker-cage just over her head. She might have been the only living creature in the world—until there swaggered up the steps to her side an obstreperously new Spring suit, of pale green, twirling a cane, a boutonniere in his coat and, apparently, the

latest bon-mot on his lips. For gone now the languor! Instead, a flashing smile, volleys of laughter, a hysteria of gayety; then an eager, flaunting prance up and down the street, arm-in-arm.

Cartell's gaze followed them. They had youth, vigor, strength, health—and Spring. Nothing else matters—was his mood: not even the tragedy of color.

Hucksters, jousting for the trade of the lane, brought pictures of Spring in their latticed caravans and songs of Spring in their challenging cries—'Tomatoes—potatoes—new carrots—peas!' Cartell wished he could shout like that. Tried to, and smiled to find his voice a mere husk.

A hand-organ came along and played—as only an Italian can play the hand-organ in Spring-time; tangoes, trots, waltzes, tarantellas, two-steps—his whole repertoire. For soon he was making money—and eyes at the dark fanciulla in the door-way. Not so much darker than his own kind, and, besides, the Latins.—And he had set the bambine a-dancing. He enjoyed that, too: troops of grinning children—whose varied shades of color told a story,—even the tiniest toddling to the measure.

The street was in carnival, all the world that Cartell could see and feel—in carnival. Spring brought wine to the air. The sky flew banners of rose and gold. The budding trees—locust, maple, magnolias—gave of their myrrh and attar. From the garden below the porch, lilac, honey-suckle and arbutus of-

ferred incense to nascent Nature. A thousand windows mirrored illumination: countless lanterns—violet, indigo, ochre, green, crimson, amber—all salvaged from the sinking sun.

On a hill-top, in the distance, an ungainly mansion of Caen-stone—palazzetto—preened its fancied splendours in the sun-tinted waters of terrace fountains; running-riot with the Renaissance and the profits of a patent headache-powder.

Swallows, pigeons, sparrows, other birds-about-town, flew about restlessly, uncertainly, calling invitingly, anxiously, querulously, questing companionship 'gainst the coming night and its loneliness. Yokel crows, in the suburbs, cawed complainingly, as if out-of-patience with some laggard "date." In the central blue over the park, far, far up, two fish-hawks poised side by side above the lake, apparently selecting the menu of a *souper-a-deux*.

Carnival everywhere—except on the tree-branch overhanging the balcony—there—a solitary oriole, all fussed-up in fresh Spring scarlet, with a look of somewhere-to-go-but-no-one-to-go-with, gazes disconsolately at a couple of dowdy sparrows flirting outrageously.

A wonderfully beautiful world—young, strong, gay, glowing even in the deepening twilight.

Of late all the atmosphere of the place had been electric with gayety. The nurses tingled and

sparkled with it. Sluggard patients responded, jolted to convalescence by the pervasive cheer. If one, stubborn, stuck his temper or grouch into that frolic current he'd get the stinging come-back of a Leyden-jar.

The prospect of Graduation—now only a few days off—was a vista strung in festoons of new gowns—modish mufti after three years of service-blue—dinners, tea-dances, theatre-parties; villegiatures in the hunting-country, the Eastern shore, White Sulphur, the Alleghanies. All the varied excitements of forty coming-outs, all together, under one roof.

Over two or three caps bride-veils were already floating: and in the weaving for twice as many—despite their sworn spinsterhood. . . . Those caps are only pinned on—not rivetted.

There was a continual coming of presents from parents, friends and beaux, and a constant trade of their hurried display, in corridors, chart-room, diet-kitchens, verandahs. 'Attractive!' out-of-breath from repeated admirations, gave place to 'Most attractive!' No gift missed the superlative acclaim; Miss Savile's circlet of amber beads might have been the necklace of Saitaphernes: Miss Morell's pink tourmaline paled the Orloff or Kohinoor. Kerchiefs of cambric turned to point-d'Alençon. A box of silk stockings—to the Bishop's daughter—was as good as a trousseau. And as for the sweaters—no mere rainbow could supply all those colors! Every girl,

apparently, had made one for every other girl in the class, and the interchange buzzed like the rug-fair at Pera.

Less than ever, now, like a hospital. More than ever like a house-party. . . . "Hardly—with all those patients in plain view!" No, no—merely some of the guests, tired-out or slightly indisposed, having a snack in their rooms. They'll all be out here, presently, on the verandah. "Yes, but—" sniff—sniff!—"that's surely ether, in the halls." Ether, your grandmother!—that's some thrifty soul cleaning her gloves with economy and carbona.

There, on the Porch rail, are some of Miss Savile's—*mousquetaires*—put to dry in the westing sun while she hurries off to supper, calling back, at the door: "I won't be long, sir!" Just as she'd always said—just as every nurse says on leaving the patient, if for a moment or an hour. And always in the same, impersonal tone that Miss Savile had used. It's a mere formula, of course. And yet, perhaps, her tone today was somewhat different: a trifle less professional: a trifle more—more—"Rubbish!" reason growled: "don't be a fool!"

Her cape repeated it. She had tossed it on the chair near Cartell's, when she went in. 'Gainst the rules—to leave things about on the Porch—but no one there now except her own patient, and rules relax in sight of Graduation. Besides, who cares a hang for rules in Spring-time? "Still . . . don't

be a fool!" the cape repeated, not unkindly but firmly.

It was of blue—lighter than her uniform—of military cut, and she rather swaggered in it, unconsciously à la vivandière. He gazed at it fixedly, with curious intensity, fascinated, imagining her presence within its fold. Reached out his hand to touch the cloak; so vivid the image of her—in the strange, uncanny way that apparel comes to resemble the owner. . . . Yes, he would—he'd tell her! This might be his last chance.

He counted the days to the Graduation; she'd be leaving immediately after, her plans all made for a jolly summer of rest and travel; when she'd return he'd be gone—somewhere! He wasn't sure. No more the doctors. They spoke fair, but—'we'll wait and see.' Still . . . what harm? He'd like her to know—how these months of companionship, eager care, devotion, had come, little by little—'No, instantly!—Sandra, long ago—from the very first—he had known—Don't be a damn fool!' he punched at himself, laughing, and mightily pleased that he still had sense enough to realize his folly—the utter absurdity. . . . And yet it did happen so—often—patient and nurse—bound to happen—inevitably, in common belief. So that the frequency has moulded phrases and philosophy ready-to-hand:—

'Propinquity does it?' So they say—the pundits;

it's obvious and easy. And they'll cite you Plato, Luther, Kraft-Ebbing, Schopenhauer.

'Wiles and stratagems!' So more say—mostly those of their own gentle sex. Speak of service and sacrifice, and they'll answer traps and snares—for the other sex. . . . 'Abundant game here, and always open-season.' . . . 'No fool like an old fool, except a sick one—and he's worse.'

'Pity.' Some say that—the foolish; and quote you "Oronooko" and Shakespeare—who never hesitates to hang the truth when it kills a phrase.

Still, even pity—faute-de-mieux—will serve. 'Not twenty-one! She's scarcely that. Don't be a—They have your age, there, in the record of the case. Why the devil did you have to—?'—'Tisn't a Census Report, nor a Bureau of Vital Statistics.'

An utter melancholy gripped him, body, soul and mind: gripped him like a vise, so that it hurt and the pain welled up to his eyes; and Miss Savile, come to say good-night, protested:

"At it again, sir! We can't leave you alone for ten minutes but you're off thinking. I won't allow it, sir. Why, you've had a perfect day."

"That's just what I was thinking. All in all I *have* had a perfect day—but what a hell of a finish!"

"If you feel that way, she humored, with pretense of annoyance, "have it so!"

"What?"

"That h—— kind of a finish you spoke of.—"

'Boy!' she called: 'Page Mr. Pol Roger and the Haig family! Never mind, boy—I'll find them—in '73.'—Which would you like, sir,—the Champagne or Scotch?"

"Both sound attractive.—But you don't believe in stimulants?"

"No, I don't, but you do. You think it helps you, and while the delusion lasts I suppose we'll have to indulge it."

"'Science,' eh?"

"No! 'Free expression.' No inhibitions. I've told you all about it before."

Yes, he recalled.—"Something to do with swearing and bread-pudding.—The theory certainly made good in that case."

"Never fails, sir. Try it out, for yourself, the rest of the time you're still here. Have what you like—do as you like—say what you like."

"That's a large order—on a day like this—'Say what you like.' You might think it blithering idiocy."

"That's all right," she said,—“so long as you think it's sensible.”

H'm.—He knew there was a catch somewhere in the theory.

He sipped the suave, saffron wine, leaning at the rail of the balcony. With the last drop, he faced the West and exclaimed to space with surprising vigor: "A perfect day—I'll tell the world!"



“Leaving me to tell the doctors—and get called down properly—for not asking them first.”

“I asked them days ago,” he reassured her,—  
“soon as the champagne was sent to me.”

“Doctor Fenway, I’m sure, forbade it. He always does, even in pneumonia.”

“He only said: ‘We’ll talk about that later.’”

“Yes, very much later, you’ll find! And Dr. Hampden?”

“‘Try it,’ he said,—‘see what happens. Can’t tell, ’till we try it. Don’t know much ’bout anything, ’till we try it.’”

“And Doctor Kreweson?”

“‘No good!’ he thinks. ‘Cut it out! Reaction bad.’”

“There! You see!” she triumphed.

“Yes, but Doctor Tantree.—”

“Read you a lecture—on alcohol!”

“First off, yes. Then he read the label and—  
‘Go to it, man, go to it!’—Quot homines, tot sententiae.”

“Indeed I’ll quote him, first chance I get.—What does it mean, sir?”

“Four expert opinions and all different. Now where are you?”

“Up in the air. But no matter.—You’re almost through here now—only a few days more, sir, and I’ll be coming to tell you: ‘Taxi’s waiting!’ I shall always look back to that as one of the happiest days in my life as a nurse—when I saw my patient

—my first serious case—walk out of here, on his way to perfect health, just as though nothing had ever happened!”

His dulled wits framed only the obvious: “All thanks to *you*, girl.”

“Nonsense! She gave the thermometer the preparatory flick. “You know what Doctor Harley said: You-all had luck.”

“Yes—but I shall always go on believing that *you*—Sandra——”

“Bosh!”—and the thermometer—stopped him, for the prescribed minutes, during which her gaze was fixed on the window at his back.

“I shall always believe,” he resumed, despite her protesting gesture—“that ‘bosh’ and ‘nonsense’ paralyze ‘free expression.’”

“So they should, sir,” she muttered through a ripple of laughter,—“when half-a-dozen of the girls—there, in the diet-kitchen—are pretending to be so terribly busy that they couldn’t possibly hear a word from the verandah.”

## CHAPTER XXII

# THE IMPS OF MISCHANCE TAKE A HOLIDAY

**R**EGULAR as a lunar eclipse, a curious, inexplicable phenomenon recurs on Graduation-day: there are no operations! The routine of the hospital goes on, without break or change in the least detail, except—no operations!

Because no occasion for them—no need of them—and even no excuse for them. Human anatomy runs straight today. Every member of the inner circle seems honor-bound to behave with decorum. Even the capricious, flirtatious appendix—usually springing some sudden mischief—cuts out the didoes. The younger set, like the tonsils and the sub-deb adenoids, postpone their outings. Preparedness stands on tip-toe, as always, keen to the clang of the ambulance; but nothing happens. Not even the inevitable emergency. Autos fail to maim today—try as they will; the unloaded pistol sends the bullet a-miss; lollipops, apple-size, designed to choke the gurgling babe-in-arms, melt under the magic of the day and trickle pleasingly into the tiny tum-tum.

Even the cough-drops, swallowed in the dark, forget to turn into bichloride tablets.

‘Luck?’ In part, perhaps; but more likely custom and tradition; and a gentlemen’s-agreement among germs, microbes, bacilli and all the imps of Mischance to hold-off for the day. “Après vous, Mesdemoiselles!”—one imagines them bowing to the blue-garbed troop drawn up on the platform: “This is *your* hour.”

In that spirit of deference the clergyman addresses them; his speech a grateful blend of fervid devotion and polite discretion. He is, throughout, the man of God and the man of the world.

The perils and the temptations that beset the nurse’s calling he pointed to plainly; but he touched them lightly. . . . They had seen it done quite differently only a few days before, in a public “drive” for nurses; a heavy hand had dragged before them, from over-there, ‘horrible examples’:—drunkenness, licentiousness, impiety and cigarettes. A fanatic voice told of ‘the red badge of sacrifice smirched by scarlet spangles!’ And they had hardly listened: or, else, amused. Today they heard, spellbound, a casual hint, low-voiced and matter-of-fact:—

“And when evening comes, with the natural reaction from long hours of trying service, and the nerves give ’way, and you yearn for relaxation,—that is the time to be—watchful, on guard against”—he hesitated, while his eye scanned the rows of

youth and loveliness—then went on: “ ’gainst distractions—dangerous distractions.”

Neat work! thought Cartell. And that the lesson went home you could hear in the tearful drone with which they now began their class-song:

Work, for the night is coming  
Work through the morning hours  
Work while the dew is sparkling  
Work ’mid springing flowers.

Work when the day grows brighter  
Work in the glowing sun  
Work, for the night is coming  
When man’s work is done.

Their sweet, young voices quavered and broke under the tragedy of those last two lines. A Gall-curci might scoff at the technique; but a Schumann-Heink would envy the effect.

Why don’t they sing like that at the Opera? Cartell wondered. Who ever saw anyone crying at the Metropolitan—over “Faust”—“Romeo and Juliet”—“Cavalleria”—or even sniffing? His neighbors were, stifling boo-hoo’s, some of them—men as well as women, visitors no less than patients. He should, too, in another minute—and so crowded-in, hang it! he couldn’t get at his handkerchief——

Just then, without warning, the solemn hymn switched, swung and danced—words and music—into the class-song proper; set to a grig of a two-step—a regular rake of a tune. Sort that makes formal Terpsichore kick up her heels. And words

to fit—a rib-tickling gibe at their gingham in the very first line, a roaring dig at the Rules in the next, a slam at the internes, a guy of the oft-recurring goulasch——

The clergymen on the platform sat up, startled straight. Looked to Dr. Fenway, Dr. Hampden, the Board-of-Directors, then about—at the students, the audience, at each other; perplexed, amazed, bewildered, open-mouthed and, the next second,—shaking with laughter! red-faced and unashamed. Which relieved the audience mightily. For till now the families and friends of the graduates sat flabbergasted by the theatric trick. For that it was; a prize-number for a musical-comedy. The song that made the show. In his mind's eye, Cartell saw the smiling chorus troop out front on a run-way, amid calls for Author! Author!

The Bishop's daughter wrote the words; Miss Killarney—who wouldn't dance—wrote the two-step, transposing the sober hymn with the sort of cunning that jollied a muezzin-song into "Dardanella." What of verve the composer missed, the pianiste vamped. The choristers carried-off the trick with histrionism quite prodigious—for a hospital.

"Scratch the nurse and find the actress!" Talapoff exclaims.

The Finnish *feministe* finds in the drama of hospital-service a considerable factor of "The Nurse-

Motif." In his treatise of that title he asserts: "To experience whelming emotion only that she may bend it to noble purpose or exult in its dissembling is dream and instinct of the sex. The robe of the nurse is for her at once the cloak of Samaria and the mantle of Thespia."<sup>1</sup>

Choosing so—and habit prompting—one may find at every turn likeness of the theatre. Obviously, of course, the costume: spick-and-span always as though scanned by the most exigent of ward-robe women; trim of fit, of antique cut that mingles Redfern and Rembrandt, chic and piquante to puzzlement save by comparison with the horrid grotesques of the day's modes.

Stubborn and wilful must be homeliness that persists in that costume. Only a girl who hardens her heart—and her features—against winsomeness can prevail against it. Whence comes, doubtless, the rule of feminine beauty here as in the theatre: a peculiar level of charm, or the illusion of it. So that in common speech an adjective of grace attaches spontaneously to nurse as to actress.

The theatre makes shrewd advantage of the costume; calls it player-proof and critic-proof. No actress has ever gone wrong in the nurse's garb. Some who in sartorial splendors have always left the audience cold struck unsuspected fire in this simplest

<sup>1</sup>The publisher has been unable to verify this quotation, and others cited by Cartell from the same source, in any of the available works of Professor Talapoff.

adornment. Of the three actresses now foremost in public favor, two came to fame over night in the nurse's frock, and the third in the costume most nearly like it.

Often, too, stage-craft orders the scene; bleak, bare corridors and public-wards shift, in a jiffy, to a garden-set of exotic brilliance. Doors ajar show the floral luxuriance of a prima-donna's dressing room. The glow and fragrance of an opera première proclaim the advent of a social "star."

The smooth routine of the theatre is here: the precision of appointed rôle: the minute-hand punctuality: the etiquette of deference nicely graduated to rank and post. And off-stage—the Finn detects—a spirit of gaiety even while tragedy stalks the boards.

This gaiety, at which some rail, some marvel, he sees to be a mask. "With the nurse it is as with the player, who to retain control of his mimic faculties must conquer his actual emotions—presuming, of course, that he have any—or conceal them utterly. He may not hope to pass the real for the counterfeit. To pretend the best, he must feel the least." . . .

A Booth or Forrest could—and, on occasion did—interrupt the lament of *Lear* with a sotto-voce jest of his blubbering audience or a josh to his companion-players. Mansfield, naturally sullen and morose, larked like a school-boy throughout the horrors of "Jekyll and Hyde."



Sarah Bernhardt, feeling nothing or little of the corroding emotions she simulated so skilfully, endures for eighty years. Eleonora Duse, immeasurably higher-strung, her whole being attuned to sympathy, responding irresistibly to tragic suggestion, is quickly consumed by this very vibrance. Bernhardt used for her scenic tricks her own *voix-d'or* and the consummate mechanics of the Conservatoire; Duse used—and used-up—her very heart and soul. The French woman played *with* fire and fooled the audience; the Italian played *in* fire—and fooled herself.

These things, the patent circumstance; the garb and complexion of the theatre. Deeper one discerns the semblance in spirit and allure. The impulse of high achievement, the excitements of rivalry, the wine and fever of new hazards. That above all else—the interest refreshed by constant change. A continuous performance but always with new audiences treading on each other's heels, and play-bills varied as the souls and forms and fates of mankind. . . . Tragedy, comedy, farce, burlesque. Each new case a new adventure—a new rôle to study and play-upon; success or failure often so equally balanced—just as in the theatre—that a trifle turns the scale from Atlantic City to the Celestial City; quite as salubrious as the other, these days, and not nearly so crowded.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE GREAT STRIKE

**M**ISS SAVILE'S charge of the case would end, automatically, with her graduation. She had consented, however, to remain the week or two pending the patient's dismissal.

Immediately after the exercises she resumed the routine of her post, until he insisted that she take the rest of the day off—"and tomorrow as well."

"Certainly not, sir.—Wouldn't do at all—my first day of this—" holding up the diploma that Dr. Fenway had handed her.—"I'll be in at the usual hour."

Cartell forbade it: "You'll still be dancing then—or pop-overs."

"Indeed we won't, sir! All the musicians in town are going to strike tonight. And we must stop at twelve sharp, the Union says. So expect me at the usual hour—and please be awake, sir. You're the last patient to see me in blue-gingham, and you'll be the first to see me in white. Isn't it all—splendid!"

Her eyes sparkled with pride, exaltation—as might a young queen donning her coronation robe.

“Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,” he said.

“Yes, sir,” habit answered. “And meanwhile you ought to sleep till dinner. I’m sure the Graduation tired you. Your eyes are half closed now.—Good night, sir,” rather huskily, and reached out her hand, for the first time.

In the hall she encountered Mrs. Comley-Draycott, rounding up the graduates for a dinner-party. Sudden idea of hers—on learning that the Board-of-Directors had no fund applicable to especial entertainment of the class. She told the Board to go ahead, engage a restaurant and send the bill to her. When they declined—only, they said, because of rumors of an impending strike of cooks and waiters throughout the city—the lady invited the girls to her home. ‘Dinner at seven’ she promised—‘and she’d send them on to the dance in ample time.’ . . . Incidentally, when her guests arrived they found that their hostess had quite forgotten that her entire kitchen-staff had walked out in sympathy with the striking tin-roofers immediately after luncheon.

Sandra, hurried by this new engagement, flew down the stairs, through the hall, across the bridge to the student-house.—Tragedy at her heels—pushed into the room, pointed about, with fiendish grin, and asked mockingly: “Where is it?”—At the office, most likely, Sandra told herself. But, on

inquiry, it wasn't; nor anywhere else in the building.

She 'phoned frantically: "Maison-de-Paris." No answer, of course: the shop closed at five. She called up Madame's house-number.

"Oh, Madame Therese—my gown didn't come home!"

"Oui, oui. N'est pas finie!"

"O, but my dear woman—you *promised*——"

"Oui, oui, mais mes filles sont on strike."

"But what shall I do? What ever *shall* I——"

"Je ne sais pas—pas-de-tout.—Don' know."

"Well, I'm sure *I* know—that you're—you're—a—a—ssassin!"

"Oui, oui!"—and Madame hung up.

Sandra put out the lights, locked the door, kept perfectly still. The others mustn't know of the mishap: would only spoil their evening: she wouldn't be a kill-joy.

Soon she heard them in the corridor—laughing—chattering—complimenting one-another's costume. Some stopped at her door, knocked, tried the knob: calling "Sandra!"—"Sandra!" and, after no response: "She must have gone!"

To the pillow that stifled her sobs she confided what she was going to do to Madame Therese—yes, if it cost her license! In her rage she saw countless stars spangling the pillow in its remotest depths, blinding her eyes with their swimming brilliance, so that, frightened, she looked up—but only

to see more stars—constellations, nebulae, galaxies—glinting through clouds of tulle.

“Oh, my dear Mrs. Moncrieff!——”

“Now don’t cry—and get your nose red!”

“I’d like to—*kill*—Therese!”

“Yes, of course! But don’t! Always makes such a row—and gets into the newspapers. You mustn’t do it!—B. M. H. wouldn’t like it!”

“Oh, but you don’t know——”

“Oui, oui!—I knew this would happen. That shop’s an awful liar—‘Maison-de-Paris’—I know them—and their oui-oui’s. Stick your bones into this—quick! You haven’t much time. Nor I—to get to the Post Office with this animal-story. I’ll send the Sedan back for you.”

Sandra found the pumpkin-colored car at the door, ten minutes later—and the chauffeur underneath! Something wrong with the magneto.—Couldn’t tell what.—Might take an hour or two!

“Get a taxi—quick—please.”

They tried: called up Brown—Green—Blue—Black-and-White:

‘Nothing doing! Men all out on a strike.’

Half way down the block a gong clanged. The Fire-House! Sandra flew, but when she reached the door the horses were already stamping back to their stalls. ‘Strike?—Et tu, Brutes?’ No, test-alarm, only.

Breathless, panting, she could only plead—  
“Please, sir, hurry—please.”

“Where’s the fire?”

“Opera-house! No fire—Ball! Please take me.”

“Good lord, Miss, we can’t take you to a Ball! What’s matter with the street-cars.”

“Not running, Chief,” some-one explained: “strike.”

“And the taxis, too!” Sandra sobbed. “O, you-all want to break my heart.”

“No, Miss, but we-all can’t break rules, either. Where you from?”—he asked anxiously: “What asylum?” he was thinking.

“Hospital—’cross the street.”

“Those folks fixed you up, Chief, that time you-all were pitched from the ladder-wagon. That’s the kid nursed you.”

“Hell you say”—and quoted; ‘So light to the cart the fair lady he swung, so light to a seat beside her he sprung’—but first putting on a last-century fire-helmet. The town is so conservative!

“I’ll likely get broke for this, but—my name’s MacArthur, Miss.”

“Attractive, sir! But faster, Mac, faster!”—and she seized the lines from his hands—resistless from sheer amazement.

Maybe people didn’t stare and gape at the sight and shout their wonder!

“Great Scott—what do you know about that?”

“Some driver—I’ll tell the world!”

“Movie-stuff?”

“Woman’s-rights stunt?”

“Strike-breaker?”

“Naw! Fire-Chief, givin’ his Mathilda-Jane a buggy-ride! And we pay taxes for that!”

“Worth it, too!”

Rather! Just one fleet vision of that strange little figure perched high on the hose-cart: clad in silvery white that flashed and spangled anew under each corner-lamp. ’Round corners—down the car-tracked street, through to Park Lane, ’cross the Square-of-the-Fountain, through a maze of strike-abandoned trolleys, trucks and taxis, she guided the Arabs—cool, confident, debonair, as though tooling a tandem through a country-lane.

It was a gala night, for all the strike at midnight. A wonderfully beautiful, magical Ball; the town hadn’t seen its like in years—nothing to compare with its splendors and surprises—not since the night that gorgeous Betty danced into the heart of an Emperor’s brother and to the very edge of a throne.

Cartell saw the carnival from behind the masking curtains of a stage-box. It was Captain Jim’s idea: to walk him out of the hospital—while Miss Newlands was preparing the supper-tray—into the waiting taxi—and off to the Opera House.

The dance was in full swing when they arrived: the floor crowded: every one there, apparently, of the Hospital staff and from half-a-dozen others.

But no Miss Savile!

Cartell searched everywhere in the swirling

throng, but couldn't find her: then sent Captain Jim to the floor below, to learn, discreetly, if she were there.

Hadn't arrived, he reported: probably at the very last moment, put on an emergency case. That often happened. They must go to fetch her, Cartell insisted.

Too late, alas! The hour is striking twelve! The fiddlers jump up from their chairs—breaking a polka square in two, and disappear under the stage.

But the measure goes straight on!

In the place of the half-dozen time-punchers are musicians—a score or more—in scarlet jacket, velvet-collared and gold-frogged: the Red Hungarians of old—before Hungary turned Red and when Buda-Pesth was still the gayest of capitals. . . . Larry, Doctor Hampden's son—he of the jazz-clinic—is leading them, with the fiery gestures of Mr. Sousa, but still sober-faced and horn-spectacled. And Cartell marvelled that all the players were exactly like him; as like as peas-in-the-pod; first-fiddles and second, 'cello, harp, trombones, horns, drum—snare and base—all boyish-young, like Larry—sober-faced and horn-spectacled.

Cartell felt the lure of the music, crescent every moment—and suddenly the vision of Miss Savile, appearing from nowhere, in the throng of dancers: borne along, light as thistle-down, on Doctor Harley's arm. Mostly with him she danced, Cartell observed. Now and then they'd glance up at the



box, smiled and nodded to Cartell, not in the least amazed to see him there.

He rose abruptly, as if to leave, and the Captain made to help him in his coat. But Cartell said "No:" he was going on the floor—to dance. Captain Jim sought to restrain him: pointing out the danger—he could hardly stand now!—the wrath of the doctors—the nurses would be blamed—and, finally, pointed to Cartell's street-clothes—he couldn't go on the floor in those! There were others there not de-rigueur, Cartell protested; a dozen or more of the convalescents—some only lately admitted to the Porch Club and showing it, too, with their charley-horse dance for a two-step!—and he fought off the Captain, to and fro in the Box, again and again from the door to the rail, where the struggle grew mad, 'till they leaned far, far over, on the brink of falling—*were* falling on the heads of the dancers——

A servant, in green livery, bobbed up from the prompter's-box, well down to the footlights, and announced, resoundingly:

"Supper now being served in the——"

"It's been waiting some time, sir." Miss Newlands is saying. "But you were dozing so comfortably I didn't like to wake you."

Cartell saw the tray hazily, but clearly that Miss Newlands now wore the green silk sweater on which Miss Sayile had been working so long.

"I suppose by now, sir, our young ladies are having the time of their life."

"Yes," said Cartell, "I saw them."

Miss Newlands made no comment on this obviously feverish statement. She never did, in such cases: probably, some stubborn atom of ether, lurking in a brain-cell. She believed it was better to let them rave on in peace, if they enjoyed it. But she took his temperature.

"Up?" he asked.

"No, sir. I thought, possibly, you'd been overdoing it today—what with the Graduation and everything—and taken some cold. When I came in you were sniffing a bit."

('Nothing escapes her!—Telepathic!')—"Have you ever noticed, Miss Newlands, that a long illness leaves one sort of—maudlin?"

"Naturally, sir."

"You might almost say, 'mushy.'"

"Why, of course, sir. The mind gets soft, same as the muscles, and the brain-cells seem to be the last to renew themselves. We all expect the patient to drool a bit. Some nurses believe in encouraging the convalescent along those lines—as a sort of mental exercise."

"Sounds reasonable."

"O, it's all right, if it isn't overdone. I've seen cases where the reaction was rather troublesome. But it doesn't last long—in my experience."

“How long usually?” His query was anxious, almost complaining.

“That depends, sir, on the extent of the—delusion. One hears, of course, of really desperate cases, with serious complications.”

“What’s the approved treatment in such cases?”

“That’s left entirely to the patient, sir. That’s where the mental-exercise comes in.”

Great mind, Miss Newlands!

## CHAPTER XXIV

# A PHRASE THAT LOST A PULPIT AND WON A WING

THE courtship of Abner Huggins was swift and facile enough; but not the marriage. Three clergymen—militant against divorce—refused to make the Contessa Bianchi plain Mrs. Huggins. There was always Elkton, of course, and not far away; but the Contessa declined that as “too elopish and kiddish.”

“Why not your brother?” she suggested.

“Impossible! Michael’s never done it with a divorced party.”

“But this is all in the family,” she argued. “Let me talk to him.”

“No use. He’s recently had one run-in with the Governors—” Abner habitually thought in terms of Wall Street—“and just escaped being scratched off the list. However, I’ll make a bid——”

“No, no, let me, Huggums. I’m rather bullish on your brother Mike.”

Only a little while ago Michael Huggins had missed, by the hair’s-breadth of a phrase, a pulpit

in a great city and a congregation of wealth and fashion. Yes, opportunity knocked at his door, on Easter Sunday, and led him, for a try-out, to St. Edmund's-in-the-Square.

His wife had outlined his sermon—and filled it in, largely—all the while she filled his grip-sack for the journey to the Wicked City and the wicked congregation. She just knew what they needed most—plain talk about the Seventh Commandment and Divorce. High time Michael put a stop to their goings-on. He had always taken high ground on divorce; now let fly his oriflamme! He'd do his best, he promised—with reservations. And he was glad of that loop-hole, the instant he faced his audience.

He wished, devoutly, that he had thought out another theme. The Seventh Commandment was not for these pillars of society—exquisitely turned in every part—base, column and capital;—the women's hats—'why didn't Mrs. Mike ever wear that sort?'—and the trim heads of the men—he wished he'd had a city hair-cut!—and he wished his clothes were better fitting, and that he could be sure—sure as salvation—that his neck-tie wouldn't climb up over his collar at the back. It always did when he got warmed up.

"For my sermon, this morning, dear people"—he wondered that he could be so familiar—"I turn to the Seventh"—he imagined a sigh of boredom throughout the assemblage while he kept on turning

—“to the seventh—er—verse, sixteenth chapter, of Corinthians: ‘I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit,’—and”—still turning—“to Job: 21st chapter: 3rd verse—‘Suffer me that I may speak: and after that I have spoken, mock on.’ ”

He couldn't restrain a smile at his narrow squeak from an ugly predicament; and the audience, though mistaking his mind, shared the amusement. The man had wit, and precise articulation: rather English. As for the rest—an Avenue tailor could easily correct that.

Feeling their favor, he warmed to his subject; not hotly, but with a cosy glow. He had himself well in hand: knew the mood of his hearers. ‘Easter Sunday,’ he kept telling himself—‘not Billy Sunday.’ And soon his frigid audience was melting under his humour and good-nature. . . . Yes, this man might tarry a while.

Then the imps of mischance let loose a spider, on the back of Michael's neck—or was it a beetle—big, black?—No, worse—Michael's neck-tie. He saw it out the corner of his eye—felt it climbing up over his collar—up, up into the air, it seemed to him—and all his gentleness with it. Rebel thoughts surged in—fierce, anarchic rage against his fractious, frazzled, collar-climbing neck-tie, his country-barber hair-cut, his frayed shirt-cuff, and all such works of poverty. Then, by some quirk of mind, he thought of Abner—the Grand Mogul—in the hospital—sticking to his room that others needed sorely

—gourmandizing on chops and Lyonnaise potatoes and orange-juice that might better go to the public ward. What with the hospital on top of Abner, and Abner on top of the neck-tie, and the neck-tie on top of the collar—he lost sight of his actual audience. He saw only Abners. Every man, in every pew looked just like Abner: was Abner. And he found himself talking business to Abner. “All very well to be diligent in business,” he was saying quite calmly now; such a man ‘shall stand before kings.’ . . . Some of you, I believe, have actually done so: stood before kings as familiars. Loaned them money. Made them gifts of yachts and stallions and tips on stocks and jewels for their good ladies. And from standing before kings you came to sit down with them, at feasts of precious—chops and priceless—potatoes and Johannisberger and—and—orange-wine—all of which”—confound that neck-tie!—“might better go to the public ward.” From which he stepped, naturally, into the realm of the King of Kings, before Whom they must some day stand. “What matter, then, to have been diligent in business, if they have neglected His—thinking only of their own guts and gold?”

The fat was in the fire! Michael sensed the sizzle—especially in the choir-loft—throughout the Recessional. His hopes went up in the smoke of a sermon that was roasted to a turn.

He had his Easter dinner with a mighty personage

—who afterwards personally conducted him—a token of supreme favor—through his famous art-galleries. And so pleased was he by Michael's sapient appreciation of Pat Sheedy's Duchess of Devonshire, by Gainsborough, and Sassoferrato's blonde Madonna, that he did his best—and there was little in the world his best couldn't accomplish—to have him made Rector of St. Edmund's-in-the-Square. But, for once, the vestry outvoted him. After Michael's 'guts and gold!' "No, we're not having any today, thank you kindly."

And yet, somehow, that sermon remained a jovial memory with the mighty personage. More than once, he repainted the scene for his cronies over their kneipe-bouts of fabulous Johannisberger, with high-lights on the flabbergasted aspect of the front pews.

With Michael, too, that Easter Sunday remained always a precious memory. He had many a paunch-shaking chuckle over that sermon—for which he hoped the Lord would forgive him! He knew his wife wouldn't.

The Contessa had her talk with Michael and her way with him.

He accepted the responsibility with a chuckle. Though his wife predicted a rebuke from the Bishop and a five-dollar fee from Abner.

"I should refuse it," Michael promised.



“I should hope you would! You seem to remember everything in the Bible—book, chapter and verse—except that the——”

Her husband turned on her sharply, with hand raised in protest.

“Well, then,” she twittered, “Luke: 10:7—since you don’t like the words themselves.”. . .

It was a June wedding—on the day following the graduation of the student-nurses. So that the Contessa could have for bride’s-maids Miss Trenholm and Miss Condé—her nurse and Mr. Huggins’s. She wanted it to be, in so far as possible, a novelty: something she’d never had before—“a hospital wedding.” She would have liked them to wear their blue gingham uniforms; but Miss Beaux put her foot down on that. So the Contessa sent them, for the occasion, gowns of cerule crêpe-de-chine, quite after the fashion of the uniform but with its severity glorified by the smartest of modistes. The nurse’s-cap was tricked into a rakish toque; and for their only jewelry they had bar and cuff pins of Etruscan gold—the bride’s gifts. The Contessa planned the wedding-breakfast to be a garden-party continuing throughout the day, with a Marimba band for dancing under a blue-striped marquis-tent and a vaudeville-show at night—all in the sandy yard below the Porch where she and Mr. Huggins had first met. Thus she planned to give the Graduation “*une cachet tout-à-fait jolie.*”

Miss Beaux put her foot down on that, also. 'Entirely too jolly—for a hospital.'

After the curt rites, the bride-groom, drawing a check-wallet from his inside coat-pocket, asked brusquely:

"What's the charge, Michael?"

Michael shook his head, mumbling faintly: "Nonsense!"

"'Nonsense,' yourself, man! 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.' Your Bible says that."

"So my wife tells me," the clergyman laughed.

"Well, then, give it to her—for a new hat, or—ukulele!"

Michael declined, decisively.

"But you're entitled to something. I'll leave it to the"—he turned to Miss Condé from habit, but completed—"to Mrs. Huggins."

"It is something"—Michael said—"more than enough—to see you happy."

"Take care, Michael, or you'll be sprouting wings."

"Don't need them, Abner, but the hospital does, —one wing, at least. Send them that check—for the marriage-fee." And he brought pen and ink.

"Well—I'm new at this sort of thing.—How much?"

Michael, bowing, referred him for answer to the bride.

“What’s usual,” Huggins asked her, “in these cases?”

“This isn’t a usual case, is it?” she parried.

“Perhaps not. What’ll I make it?”

“Whatever you think I’m worth, *mon cher ami*.”

“Good lord, madame, do you want to bankrupt me?”

“Not before the honeymoon.”

The way she said it—threat or promise? Abner wasn’t certain—caused him to drop the poisoning pen. “Yes, yes, I’ll send the check afterwards. The hospital can wait a month—if that’s the usual length of the honeymoon?”

“That’s up to you, old top.”

Abner grimaced at the familiarity.

Michael chuckled.

The bride told him—*‘le mani al petto’*—how deeply she’d been moved by his admonitions: ‘never before had she felt so thoroughly and irrevocably married’:

“Maybe it’s because you’ve read so much Dante, but, you know, you’re not the least like a regular clergyman.”

“My vestry, alas! says the same.—And my wife, too.—Sometimes I doubt that I was really ‘called.’ ”

“Well, you deserve to be called—all sorts of nice things. We’re going to get on famously. I can never repay that Hospital for Abner’s brother. And—I’ll see your wife changes her hat-shop.”

Later, when he kissed the bride good-bye, he whis-

pered: "Abner's check to the Hospital—don't let him forget it, *after* the honey-moon."

"*Prendo subito, amigo.*"

Michael laughed outright: "That's much nicer, isn't it, than our 'I get you, Steve.'—And see that he's generous."

"What amount?" she asked.

"That's up to you," he quoted.

In the diversions and distractions of the Springs, Mr. Huggins must have lost track of time, by a fortnight or so. The honey-moon lacked quite that of the full when a letter reached Miss Beaux:

Dear Madam:

Since forcing my way out of your establishment—where you all insisted on keeping me several days longer than was necessary—I recall that you or the doctors or, possibly, some of the nurses rather intimated once or twice that your Hospital needed more rooms. Out of the enclosed certified cheque—No. 8973—you can, perhaps, squeeze a few and also some orange-juice.

Respectfully yours—

Abner Huggins.

Miss Beaux looked at the check and gasped:

"Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars—*and* seven cents!"

A postscript said:

"The seven cents is for taking me to the railroad-station. Your ambulance-man wouldn't accept it.

He may have the makings of a good doctor, but he's a mighty bad business-man."

Across all this ran an angular scrawl—"Not bad for Muskogee!"

That day brought joy to the Hospital, and a new catch-phrase—almost as useful and frequent as 'attractive':—

"We all love Abner."

## CHAPTER XXV

### FOUR THOUSAND MILES BY TAXI

**I**N the Swiss Alps Cartell found, gradually, new zest of life. He had come here, straight from the Hospital, by way of the Tangu carpet.

The place in all its soothing circumstance was "indicated" for convalescence. Pines, fir and spruce gave their anodyne to the air; magnolias and locusts their drowsy perfume. In the valleys below a slumbrous landscape spread a crazy-quilt of emerald pastures, russet fields, tawny meadows and pastel orchards. A shallow brook loafed down the mountain-side, sinuous and soundless save when it stubbed its toe 'gainst snag or cobble. Far off, at the horizon's edge, the topaz waters of the saline bay blinked sleepily in the sun.

No sound broke the stillness of the scene, except occasionally the faint love-call of quail or the cat-bird's tender mew.

The Night brought, of course, intenser quiet; brought, too, the poignant melancholy that seizes the spirits of the sick when the moon puts on the grinning mask of Momus and the stars flaunt their eternal youth.

And it brought, too, 'bout nine o'clock, a Marimba band from Nicaragua and one of Jazz from the Barbary Coast. In their train there came, from the neighboring chalets and from the villas of the city twinkling in the distance, dozens, scores and hundreds of dancers.

Then, till nearly midnight, there was hell-to-pay; rosy, care-free, merry hell!

All these adjuvants of rejuvenescence assembled here, on this solitary Alpine-top, in easy liaison with the Hospital. Twenty minutes by taxi; thirty by trolley-car. And scarcely a night that one or more of the younger physicians couldn't be summoned from the ball-room, in a sudden emergency. Even a nurse, in a tragic crisis. But for nothing less, disturb their diversion!

Saving their presence—which any decent convalescent will fail to observe—the illusion lacked nothing of Switzerland—in the region of Wengen, say,—except, perhaps, the Jungfrau. If the good of the convalescents had required an ice-capped mountain, it would have been there; at least a baby Jungfrau. The Magics of the B. M. H. wouldn't stop at a little thing like that.

The back-wash of the War, some said, had landed Schwartz, the maître-d'hotel, on this mountain-top. He had learned his métier at the Daniello in Venice, the Méditerranée at Nice, the Piccadilly in London, Sacher's in Vienna. The presence of this cosmo-

politan Swiss, here, at this trolley-end tavern to which he brought the intimate quality of foreign hotels, was for Cartell merely another manifestation of Magic—until they let the jazz loose.

It consoled Schwartz to think of the Tavern as an annex to the B. M. H.—a sort of “after-cure” in the continental fashion. He took more joy in the arrival of one, poor, sick sheep from the Hospital than in the advent of a family-flock of richest fleece. . . . He tempered the wind to the shorn lambs by setting apart for them the sunniest verandahs. When Miss Ledyard fancied the one small suite with its private balcony, the present occupants were requested to vacate:—“A mistake—most regrettable—in the reservation.” For the Contessa Bianchi’s brief sojourn he screened a corner of the terrace with boxed geraniums, live palms and dwarf orange-trees. There, on a Pompeian bench, laid thick with Oriental rugs and shaded by a crimson lawn-umbrella, she might easily imagine herself convalescing on the Riviera. . . . The *salle-à-manger* offered especial diet-menus: some following the regimen of Miss Newlands and Dr. Abernethy; some bolder, but still approved by the Hospital faculty.

At night, when the jazz began to rage, a gentlewoman of broken fortune but unbending discipline chaperoned the ball-room while Schwartz moved among the convalescents bidding them—in familiar phrase:—“Be brave!—Will soon be over!—To-



night is worse than usual.—They have high temperature—the dancers. But Dr. Kreweson—he is there, in the ball-room—and Dr. Tantree—they say it is good for you—all this excitement and desolation.—May be!—The good God is mysterious.”

Miss Savile Cartell had seen but once since leaving the Hospital. Then only by chance of her accompanying Miss Beauclerc on a visit to her recent patient, Miss Ledyard.

Both nurses were in a flurry of gayety. The dreaded examinations were over. They would not know, for several weeks, the result of the ordeal.—‘And you never could tell about those cranks on the State Board!’—But there was a comforting rumour that the hospitals had advised them to consider the awkward paucity of nurses—and be reasonable.

They were starting, the next day, on long-planned vacations: Miss Beauclerc sure that she wouldn’t look at a case until the Fall—no matter how attractive—and Sandra vowing she wouldn’t so much as look at a thermometer for three months—not even to see the condition of the weather.—In two weeks both were back at the Hospital.

From Margot came letters, of crescent infrequency and solicitude: ‘Why on earth didn’t he hurry and get *perfectly* well!’—‘When was he going to be through with those *dreadfully* depressing doctors—and *quite* away from those frumpy nurses!’—

'And *why* did he stick on at that funny hotel which she'd heard was no better than a sanitarium?' . . . Some plans of her own, she concluded, waited on his *complete* recovery.

Then, one day, a 'phone-call, unexpectedly, from the station: She'd just arrived—was coming out for luncheon—and a nice, long, talk and:—"My, it's good to hear your voice again!"

"I thought I'd worked this all out on the train, but now I'm here it isn't so darn easy as it looked."

"Can't I help you?" Cartell offered.

"I don't know.—It's a—a—rather naughty story."

"Won't it keep till luncheon?—We'll be quite by ourselves, there, on the lawn."

"No! Let's have it out before.—That table, under the trees, looks very pretty—and we might get to throwing things if they're too handy."

He engaged to refrain.

"Do I really *have* to tell it?"

He shook his head; he'd tell it for her, if she liked: enough, at least, to show whether he'd guessed the end correctly.

"That's a help—I'll inform the press!"—The phrase marked her return to normal.—"And poor me lying awake o' nights trying to figure out the awful problem."

"Sort that solves itself," he said: "taken out of our hands."

“Yes, of course. But I was afraid, maybe—you’ve not been worrying over it—seriously?”

Yes, somewhat—on her account. He knew, of course, how she would dread and hesitate—though the only course possible, under the circumstances: inevitable. He told her why—many reasons, to each of which she nodded sympathy and for the best, thanks, with a press of the hand.

“Mother said you’d see it that way—and that father was all wrong.—He said a girl who’d do that sort of thing isn’t worth hell-room.”

Even so, Cartell promised, any man would jump to share it with her.

The warmth of the compliment mellowed her mood.

“But there isn’t anyone else”—she protested—“I want you to believe that. And there isn’t going to be—at present. But you’ve made me terribly unhappy—being so *sensible* about it. I think I’d kiss you—only there’s the waiter, thank heaven—’cause I’m frightfully hungry.”

Margot marvelled at the splendid isolation of the Inn. Likened it to a roof-garden. Wondered could you see the noisy, smoky town beyond the trees, or even the public road beneath. She walked to the edge of the terrace and a few steps below, returning with an armful of Black-eyed Susans that ran wild and irrepressible as the girl herself.

In her absence, Schwartz crossed the lawn to

ask: "Is everything right?—The menu sufficiently—attractive?"

"Quite perfect, yes."

"And"—with admiring smile—"the charming lady is, of course, your wife?"—Schwartz advised rather than asked.—"No?—Ah—ah—that is too bad—desolating!—such a beautiful day.—She is *most* attractive"—reflecting, again, the pervasive influence of the Hospital and the foreign amenities.

The girl was at her best, throughout the luncheon. Cartell could hardly remember her so amiable, gracious, charming as she was today. Like all healthy, happy young women she ate amazingly well, and could maintain all her fascinations while doing it.—Byron said that was beyond any woman—and, so, left his wife. Margot, today, would have won him. Bantered delightfully with every sip of the bisque: uttered exquisite sentiments of tender affection between bites of the tender filet: put teasing badinage twixt the leaves of an artichoke—and renounced her fiancé, with passionate regret, over the last spoon of the ice-cream.

No, no, she wouldn't hear of his walking down the mountain with her, to see her aboard the trolley-car.—The return-climb—she was sweetly solicitous for him.—Besides, 'she always wanted to remember him just as she saw him now—'way up here—in this scene of peace and quiet, where he was sure to get well—some day.'

When he leaned to kiss her, she turned quickly away:—"No, dear boy, that's over!"—The type *is* sincere, O Postumus!—La porte est ouverte ou fermée!

She hurried from him—almost ran—down the hill—looking back at the sharp turn of the drive to make sure he wasn't following, at peril of his scant strength. Then, scurrying through a side-path to a point of the tree-bowered road hidden from view above, she hopped into the waiting limousine.

"I rather wish you hadn't come!"

"He couldn't see me, from up there."

"No; but I don't believe I like lying—when it isn't necessary."

"But it was necessary, under the circumstances—or, at least, kind."

"O, yes, he's still shaky, of course, and his voice did tremble horribly—when he said 'good-bye.' But he had evidently thought it all out calmly and braced himself for a game finish. At times we were quite jolly. He had ordered a delightful luncheon. Just the things I like. The waiter always disappeared until wanted, and, in the tavern, the best Marimba band I ever heard played my pet tunes: So it wasn't so trying, after all."

"Good! How did he take it?"

"I don't know," she laughed: "he beat me to it—in a way."

"How?"

“Told me he realized it couldn’t be: that it was all off.”

“On account of me, I suppose?”

She shook her head: “No! Never mentioned you.”

“But what did he say?”

“Pretty much what I had planned to say to him.”

“And left it to you to decide, of course?”

“O, yes—just as I meant to leave him to decide. But he gave me several good reasons why I should decide not to marry him. Chiefly, that his future was too insecure—uncertain: the future of his work, his health, his money-affairs, his life even. He has a chance, the doctor told him; but he couldn’t allow me to sacrifice myself for a mere chance. Wasn’t that fine of him?”

“Rather, yes. But it was only the decent thing to do, wasn’t it?”

“I suppose so. Still I didn’t think I’d get out of it so—gracefully.”

He asked, of course, the “indicated” question.

“What of it—seeing the number of times I’ve done it before! As a matter of fact, never occurred to me.—And you wouldn’t ask if you’d seen him—with that well-known ‘hospital-look.’—If you ever get like that—promise me, Jerry—you’ll go away off somewhere where I can’t see it.”

A little further on, half way back to town, they crossed a jitney. Jerome bowed to the one passenger.

“Who was that?”

“That nurse of his, Miss Savile.”

“Do you suppose she’s going out to see him?”

“Quite likely.”

“And will tell him, of course, that she saw us!”

“Well, what of it?”

“Nothing—except that”—and she didn’t go on.

“Well?” he prompted her.

“O, it’s something that Mrs. ‘Tony’ told me about—hyenas—and, somehow, it hurts,” she added huskily.

He pressed her hand, reassuringly.

“Yes, Mister Man, you’ll have to be awfully good to me. I’ve done a rotten thing on your account. . . . You know, I almost wish——

“Well?”

“O, I was only thinking that he might fall in love with that nurse—but that would be too absurd, wouldn’t it, after what I meant to him—and the wonderful days we’ve had together.”

“I seem to recall you’re saying, once or twice, that you had ‘never really loved him.’ ”

“Did I?”—in surprise: “When?”

“On one occasion in the hospital, first time you took me there.”

“What an uncomfortable memory you have! Still it was true enough.—I never did love that grisly shadow of a man we saw stretched out on a horrible iron bed. And I couldn’t think of him as ever having been the man I knew. I had much that same

feeling today all the while I was with him. . . . I've always hated sickness—and death, and such things. My chow, Pim,—I can't stand him around me when he's ailing. Some women pet and hug a sick dog as though it were a child. I loathe the little beast.—And I feel the same about a man sick and weak and helpless.—Most women do—if they're quite normal. That's why I can't understand these nurses, and their coming to care, now and then, for a patient. Ugh! . . . So now you know what's expected of you." And she tapped his hand, pettingly.

"You still have his ring."—He blundered again.

"Of course, Cartell wouldn't take it back," she explained. "Besides, it's only some queer, old opal—no value.—And I've always loved the setting."

"But you won't wear it?"

"Of course not—as a ring." She took it off.—  
"I'll have it changed—a lavallière or something."

"But, my dear girl—"

"Now drop the matter, please, or I'll jump out the car"—and she seized the door-handle. "All this fuss over a penny ring—and a man who looks like—I wish I hadn't seen him today—and *you* never!"

"If you regret it too keenly, you'd best——"

"O, shut up!"

And he did—for the rest of the long ride back to town; and, later too, at dinner, he was thoughtfully silent; and then throughout the play that they both went to see in order to get away from each other.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE END OF THE WORLD

UNTIL Margot had quite disappeared at the bend of the road, and for some moments after, Cartell loitered on the hill-top. For a last possible glimpse of her? Or even the faint hope that she might turn back?

As he turned away, a pluck at the sleeve halted him, and a croaking voice:

“Ah? What did I tell you—that day on the Porch?”

“Done for, you said. Would never get out. And here I am—well!”

“Who says so?”

“The doctors—Hampden, Fenway, Harley, Tantee. All of them.”

“Kidding you! They needed the room.—She knows better—that vivid, vital, self-sufficing creature you watched run down the hill—out of your life.”

“How should she know?”

“How do they always know—everything—that goes to the quick of life?—Youth, gaiety, hot blood, bobbed hair——”

“Be off, Gribbles!—You’re crazy.”

But he kept at Cartell’s heels; played on fears till now quite stilled; dinned into Margot’s going a significance sinister and fateful.

Cartell, his eyes riveted on the sward at his feet, saw each blade of grass transform to a tiny blue-devil: troops and battalions of them, hands joined, circled about him, grinning, dancing, cavorting in snap-the-whip, swing-the-cat, dead-man’s-double, until——

“Stop thinking, sir!”

Sandra may not have recognized certainly the occupant of the passing car. Or seen only Jerome, and overlooked his companion. Or she may have forgotten the incident in the excitement of a momentous turn in her own affairs. In any event, she omitted mention to Cartell of having glimpsed his recent caller on her way to the Tavern.

She went at once to the purpose of her visit, as if to explain her coming unattended.

“There’s something you should know now that you’re out-of-the-woods.”

“Quite out?”

“Why, of course. Or I shouldn’t be making this—confession.”

“Gribbles?”

The nurse ruffled at the promptness of the guess; piqued and surprised by this proof of faulty technique. The professional’s amour-propre was hurt

—and pouted. At such a moment, doubtless, Forrester had caught the likeness to “La Cruche Cassée.”

“And you knew from the first?” she demanded.

“No, but suspected.”

“Miss Newlands thought you did. Still, it’s the only thing to do in such a case.”

“Dangerous, isn’t it?”

“Not if it’s done well.”

“You did it perfectly.”

“I tried my best, desperately.”

“Makes it all the worse! Can’t you see how the patient impressible, susceptible, self-centred by isolation, might misconstrue such sacrifice of veracity in his behalf, the martyrdom of cherished ideals? There were times, Miss Savile—I don’t mind confessing—when I had to remind myself violently: ‘Don’t be a fool!’ ”

“O, yes, I saw that, sir, on several occasions. And I always put it on the chart——”

“Suffering cats! Miss Sav——”

“Not just in those words, of course.”

“But your chart must read like a——”

“Yes, sir. It’s supposed to. We omit nothing. And the doctors regard *that* as a particularly significant symptom.”

“What—getting foolish?”

“Partly that, yes. But much more the patient struggling to conceal it. Shows the mental processes returning to normal.”

He muttered, under his breath, something that seemed to please her:

“Are you really annoyed, sir?”

The look of him left no doubt.

“That’s fine!” she encouraged. “Best symptom of all. You’ve quite come back. Just as though nothing had ever happened.”

Whatever denial he longed to make her tone and manner forefended; they had, even more than her words, the finality of ‘discharged-as-cured.’ He realized clearly that it was meant for dismissal; and yet, loth to accept it, he asked as though merely seeking professional information: “Why the deuce did all that have to happen?”

“You’ve answered yourself, sir. ‘*Had* to happen.’” Then, lest some hint of sentiment might lurk in the allusion she hurried him back to the hospital: “In our work we-all come to believe implicitly in Fate.”

(‘Yes, and She wouldn’t miss this chance,’ he told himself. ‘She liked her little jokes at his expense.’)

“Surely you don’t regret it, sir?”

“N—n—o, one shouldn’t,” he supposed, “in view of the compensations. Still—shattered plans—a lost year—future rather rickety——”

“Bosh! What does any one know of the future?—And even so—why, sir, you’ve had the rarest possible adventure. I once heard Dr. Hampden say that no man has had all of life until he has all but died.”

"Any one can have my share," he muttered.

"Not mine! It's been a wonderful experience for me. I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

He glanced at her, eagerly. She had spoken so gravely that he dared wonder for an instant——

"That sort of experience, sir, is 'the makin's' of a nurse," she added in lighter tone.

He professed delight that it hadn't all been wasted pains.

"No indeed, sir," she confirmed. "You were such a beautiful case for a beginner. Coming, too, just before those dreaded examinations for a license—most attractive! And everything went just right for my purpose, even to the case suddenly going all wrong, so there didn't seem a ghost of a chance of a rally. A turn like that is so splendid for a nurse; she's keyed taut, if she really likes her work. I learned a lot those days, Dr. Harley says. More, even, than if you hadn't pulled through—as you can easily understand."

No, he couldn't—easily. One conceives, off-hand, that some knowledge positive and unique must transpire from the other event. "And the nurse who really likes her work would naturally resent the frustration," he thought.

"Not at all, sir. It's much nicer, more satisfying all around, when the patient wins out. Otherwise, the nurse is kept wondering whether she always did just the right thing at the right moment and why didn't they try this, that, or something else.

. . . And best of all, sir, your holding on kept me, for weeks, under the notice of Doctors Fenway and Hampden. I must thank you for that!"

He disclaimed the reward; the service, whatever its worth, had been quite involuntary: automatic.

He had listened with mingled emotions to the warm-toned, cold-blooded, unabashed review of his unconscious contribution to the education of a nurse. Admirable, of course, in its professional zeal and detachment, but in its personal bearing—painfully disconcerting; like the ready snub of the Fahrenheit. Had she planned her speech with malice-prepense, to dispel any mad delusion——

"And to think that I shouldn't have had the case"—she recalled—"nor any other student-nurse—only for the accident to Miss Dalkeith!—Do you believe in Fate, sir?"

"One must—after seeing how she fixed it ages ago that the one solitary graduate-nurse available at the moment should slip in a fox-trot and snap her metatarsus——"

"Astragalus, more likely," she corrected——

"—and for no other purpose, apparently, than to finish off your training and ensure your license."

Her eyes twinkled at the note of petulant temper in this tribute to Destiny.

"I didn't mean just that, sir. Only you did seem inclined, at times, to exaggerate my int—services in the case. It's a way with patients, a phase of convalescence, to—to—*concentrate* on the nurse. Some

patients assume it as a privilege; a sort of perquisite. Others take it as an obligation. They appear to feel bound, by the amenities, to persuade the nurse, one way or another, that but for Her!—We-all think it comes largely from reading those silly Hospital stories. . . . Of course, a nurse does like a patient to feel that she's concerned about him—that's part of the job—but she doesn't want him to imagine that his life depended on her.—That's what I had in mind—if I've made myself clear——”

“Horribly, Miss Savile.” And any further avowals of gratitude he promised to reserve for Chance and her pump-shod envoy:—“Would a letter find Miss Dalkeith at the Hospital?”

Yes, but only for a few days. She would be leaving B. M. H. in a week or so. “Going to take charge of a children's-hospital at Huang-Chau.”

“What county is that?” he quizzed.

“Oh, that's off in China, sir. 'Way up the Yangtse river.”

He frowned slightly, but made no comment.

“Thank you, sir!”

“I said nothing.”

“That's just it! Everyone else, when you say ‘children's-hospital—China,’ immediately asks: ‘Why? Aren't there enough children here that need looking after?’ Apparently, that didn't occur to you.”

“No, I was thinking rather—farewell fox-trots—in China!”

"Yes, but think what a chance! And Dalkeith's an ambitious kid. She's giving up a lot for this—her people whom she's fond of—delightful home—the jolliest set in the county that she's always golfed and danced and hunted with, even after she took up nursing. Everything a girl could ask for."

"But not in love?"

"Isn't she, though? Head over heels! Her very first case, too."

"Yes, that's usually the worst."

"*Nursing*-case, I mean—first one she had in the hospital. He was there only a month. But it happened long before that—perfect crush!—almost at sight."

"That's always the worst."

"He wanted to marry as soon as he got out, but Dal insisted on graduating and then a year of practice.—Splendid chap, too. String of horses almost as good as Mr. Parr's."

"And she takes China instead?"

"No! She'll take him *and* China, if he'll go there."

"Why not?"

"Afraid of the climate—not for himself, he says, but for his horses. And he wouldn't go without them. She doesn't blame him, either; understands his feelings perfectly:—best stable in the South. And I wouldn't want him along. He'd probably fret himself into fever, and we'd have him on our hands."



“*We’d* have him’——”

She nodded ever so slightly.

“But you’re not thinking of going?”

“It’s very attractive.”

“China—at its very worst, too?”

“All the better, for our purpose. I might not learn here in five years what I’ll learn there in one.”

“Then—you—*are*—going?”

“Yes, for one year.—I stipulated that, and they’ve agreed.”

Once more the blades of grass reared up, in demon-revel—leering imps—every one a tiny Gribbles.

“What do they say at the Hospital?”

“Doctor Fenway thinks it’s fine. Though he’d rather we didn’t go; nurses are so scarce, just now.”

“And Doctor Harley—what does he say?”

“He’s away on vacation. I don’t know he’s heard of our going.”

“He *won’t* hear—of your going, I’ll wager.”

“What has he to do with it?” she laughed.

“Your fiancé?”

“Doctor Harley—my fiancé?—I’d hate Miss Killarney to hear that! They’re going to marry in the Fall.”

“And you’re not engaged to—any one?”

“Not at this writing.”

“The deuce you say! Since when?”

“Since never—and forever! I’m never going to

marry, sir. At least not for a long, long time. But where d'you get the notion 'bout Dr. Harley?"

"Why—why—from——" he floundered awkwardly, and finally owned he must have dreamed it—"Or feared it, Sandra"—spoken so faintly that easily she may not have heard, yet reached eagerly into her mesh-bag.

"No, no," he protested, "please don't——"

"What, sir?"

"Thermometer."

"I've none with me," she laughed. "You're past need of that. I'm looking for—this card: my address in China."

He noted the detailed post-directions: seven or eight items. "That's the end of the world you're going to."

"Nonsense!"

"That's how it reads on the old maps—'Finis Mundi.' Take a mis-step there—in a fox-trot—and you fall off into space."

She reminded him that to watch their step was part of their training. And that their star would light the way. There is one, she told him, especially appointed to look out for nurses. It showed in the sky for the first time the very hour Florence Nightingale reached Scutari, on the morrow of Balaklava.

"And I won't be long, sir. Only a year. That will pass very quickly."

Now, at this commonplace her voice may have

fallen to a softer note—though you or I wouldn't have remarked it; nor any crack in the professional ice on which she had been skimming so serenely, cutting figure-eights all around him. He, though, chose, foolishly, to imagine a change—and dared the chance of it.

“When the year has gone—and nothing happened,” he said, “I'll come to find you.”

“Wouldn't do you any good”—and added “sir” in crushing emphasis: “I mean,” she went on quickly, “we'd only cross on the way. For I'll be coming back, as I've told you, in a year. And I'll look you up, sir.”

“Do, please,” he entreated. “And the belief that you will means much more than you imagine.” He meant it to sound casual, in key with her speech; but, discerning failure, he hastened to generalize: “One always hates to lose a pleasant acquaintance, even though accidental.—Don't go quite out of my life when you leave here today.”

“Indeed I won't, sir. A nurse always keeps track of a case that's been at all—interesting. And you've been more than that”—again that fancied note of grace in her voice and he leaned to grasp the promise of it—“you've been a—a revelation”—candour sparkled her eyes and flushed her cheek—“of what a wonderful thing Carrel-Dakin is! I shall always remember you for that, sir—not to mention Peruvian-balsam.”

Now henceforth and forever after—it would seem to you and me—the man must hold his peace. Spin no more dreams of Sandra Savile nor vex his soul with thought of her, except to name her in his prayers, thank God for what he had had of her presence and companionship, and invoke divine grace on the calling that made such favors part of the job. . . .

“Carrel-Dakin—and Peruvian-balsam!” Nothing could be fairer than that—making clear as noon of June just how he figured to her: a lesson in anti-sepsis, a proof of the lenitive tolu of Salvador, a mile-stone—or mere sign-post—on her road to the Registry, and beyond to China. . . . No reason, now, for delusion, no excuse for folly; less indeed, far less, than that day on the Porch when self-derision and giggles from the diet-kitchen damned avowal at the very edge. . . . The zeal and patient sweetness of her service—they, of course, were routine: none but wits quite gone would make them presuming-matter.—But, Suffering Cats! there’d been something else.

‘What?’

Why—er—er——

‘Well—*what?*’

At such a moment—always with sight of the girl or mere thought of her—his mind went to the state of that curious apple in the Sultan’s garden at Shiraz: “one side, honey; one side, rue.” Oddly enough, the better side was soft—“mushy,” Miss

Newland's word; the bitter side, sound: straight-thinking. Now it was pinning him down to facts: 'Speak up—Peruvian-balsam!'

O, nothing to speak of—literally: nothing tangible or vocable—a look, a tone of voice—just the way she said 'good-morning'——

'Pish!—Elocution.—Rosina Filippi's system, or Everts'—'Mong the first things taught.'

Well—then—sometimes, a glance—caught un-awares—wandering over the top of Dixon's Pharmacology or Friedenwald's Dietetics.

'Memorizing—imbecile!'

Or, best of all, a smile, sudden and reasonless, half-confession, half-question—strangely content and madly contenting——

'Lord!—And they let you out! . . . Bet she doesn't know your first name!'

But always—until today—some show of *personal* feeling—of intimate, fond concern—evinced in ways to charm and fascinate——

'Play-acting—half-wit!—See Talapoff—chapter XIV: *Comédiennes*. Acting the most convincing and illusive because unconscious, like that of a child or dumb-animal or unspoiled amateur. . . . That, or else craft exquisite, consummate, ensained in a difficult theatre. In either case, an impeccable plan, carried out with scientific precision; a system of psychotherapy based on woman's pleasant inhumanity to man. Coquetry employed as a cardiac: the "jolly" of vernacular turned to elixir-vitæ.—Take

your medicine—Anti-sepsis!—and look pleasant; she's waiting to go.'

"Pardon, Miss Savile—I've been trying to recall something I meant to—— But, of course, I'll see you again?"

"Not likely, sir—until I get back—next year. Meanwhile, just be sensible. . . . The open-air—sea, preferably. . . . Plain food. . . . Not such black cigars. . . . Most of all, stop thinking—about hospitals, doctors or nurses—and write to me, Tom!"

The surprise of it—"Tom!"—after all her case-hardened punctilio and chary "sirs," denied breath for answer. One's first name strikes strange after long hermitage from familiars in a hospital. No use-and-wont of it there. They lock it away with your cuff-links, scarf-pin, key-chain. The return of these mundane symbols is a station of 'The Great Adventure. The nurse's triumphal "There, sir!" on that occasion recurred to Cartell; and the perk and strut of his spirits at sight of them. So, now, with her startling address.

"That is your name, isn't it—Tom?"

Mostly, when a woman does a thing like that, she means something: has in mind some snare, snub or surrender; but Sandra, whose ken compassed no artfulness, meant no more than to refresh her memory of the man's name. . . . Even so, something *might* have come of it; an outburst of emotion—or the like of it—that would sweep Sandra off her

feet into some such scene as you have every right to expect, from precedent; or even swerve her from China into some such romance as Bodley Kricke imagined.—And, if this script falls unfinished to the posthumous collaborateur with whom he had threatened Cartell—that *will* come of it.

Instead there comes, now, only Schwartz, in a hurry, to tell Miss Savile she is wanted at the 'phone.

“You will have, maybe, company for dinner?” Schwartz—as once before today—was advising rather than asking.

“No:”

“A—ah!—Excruciating—in such a weather—to dine alone!”

His sympathy deserved explanation:

“Miss Savile is going on emergency-duty—and later to China.”

So Schwartz had heard—from the Hospital. He declared it:

“Desolating!”

Cartell differed, rather sharply:

“It's—divine!”

“Yes, but . . . she dances——” He blew a kiss to the skies, leaped into the air after it . . . “like that!—But you have seen her——?”

Like that, never! But he'd been told of her dancing: “Angelic!”

“The right word—per—fect—ly. . . . And it is wrong!”

“But—why——?”

“To put wings on the shoulders and wings in the heart . . . and then, to put wings, also, on the little feet——!” Words failed the incongruity. . . . “It is from Heaven, maybe, but still . . . a mistake.”

The nurse rejoined them looking grave, preoccupied. To Cartell’s inquiry, “Patient all right?” she stammered into the formula for such queries:

“He’s—he’s much more comfortable, they ‘phoned.”

Still, she couldn’t stay to dine, and she wouldn’t have a taxi called; there being no need to hurry she would walk back part way, along the drive, and take the trolley at the other side of the park.

There was a more inviting route, Schwartz advised Cartell; a mere trail skirting the creek, moss-carpeted, and mazing, with occasional solitudes, to the boulevard-entrance; just a pleasant jaunt ‘in such a weather’: two miles—three at most.

“But that’s too long a walk back for Mr. Cartell!”

Schwartz was per—fect—ly sure they would find a cab there for the return-journey—“Unless, maybe”—to Cartell—“you decide to dine en-ville.—Yes?—The Roof-Garden”—pointing the definite article. “Yes?”



"No, no!" the nurse spoke up. "Mr. Cartell mustn't be out in the night air. You should know that, Mr. Schwartz."

"Ah, yes! I forgot. . . . Desolating!"

He saw that they took the right path, with Sandra protesting "You mustn't *think* of going all the way!"

"Now, why must she be nurse?" he mused; "and why should he be invalid? . . . Still, the good God is mysterious. . . . We will, anyway, 'phone to reserve a table. . . . That little we can do for Him."

There was a cab, sure enough, at the end of the trail: a Black-and-White, but with the fare-signal up.

"Engaged?" Cartell asked, and was asked in turn:

"From Schwartz's place?" A nod brought the chauffeur off the box, and opened the door: "Been here half an hour, but orders were to wait."

The nurse held her hand out to Cartell, and he helped her into the taxi——

"But——how are you going to get back to the Tavern, sir?"

"I don't mind," he assured her, and got in.

The cab whizzed townward.

"But he doesn't know where to take me!"

"What difference—in such weather?"

## CHAPTER XXVII

### “WHEN GALLIARD-TIME AND MEASURE-TIME—”

THEY went to dine on a roof-garden, the only one in the town, and always a hungry waiting-list in the ante-room. As they looked about, despairingly, the captain approached: “Mr. Cartell?”

“Yes.”

“Your table is over here, sir, in the pergola. Mr. Schwartz reserved it by telephone.—I recognized his description”—identified by a glance of dazzled admiration toward Sandra and backing off as if from royalty.

To Cartell, insensate to surprise after his months of magic, all this seemed matter-of-fact; but Sandra was quite bewildered.

“You didn’t know we were coming here?”

“Not when we started.”

“Then how on earth did Mr. Schwartz——?”

“Likes to think himself part of the Hospital, and acts accordingly.”

Sandra shook her head, and sighed:

"Too bad, isn't it?"

"What?"

"That they all went mad—so the whole world *has* to hate them. . . . They are *so* efficient!"

Yes, and Schwartz, he thought, might count for something in the reparations.

She assented, "Yes, sir," but so faintly and weakly that he said:

"I hope the long walk through the Park didn't tire you."

"*Me!*"—startled by the sudden turn-about of affairs.

"Is that chair quite comfortable?" he asked and, "Sure you're not in a draught here?"—a mist, tinct with the sea, was blowing through the pergola.

"No. But how about *you*, sir?"

"This tile-floor is likely damp"—he had them fetch a foot-cushion for Miss Savile, and then, after dimming the electric-candle, he asked: "Too much light in your eye?"

Unconsciously he was repeating the very questions of solicitude that for weeks she had put to him. Until, finally, she laughed: "You'd think, sir, it was *my* first night out."

Forthwith the waiter served the first course of a menu ordered apparently by magic, but, actually, by 'phone; complete throughout except for the sweet. That, of course, was the lady's prerogative. . . . When the dinner reached that point, the ice was breaking up: melting, even. So that Sandra,

scanning the card, was asking cosily: "What shall we have for dessert?—and please don't say 'I don't mind.' "

"Well—then—whatever you say."

"I'm looking"—pensively—"for whatever's most outlandish—something you never had while in the Hospital."

"Floating-Island!" he prompted.

She flamed at the reminiscence, and hurried to decide:

"That!" she told the waiter, indicating the item.

Glibly and impassively he read off:

"Poutinade-au-pain rassis-de-ménage à la Montparnasse, avec sauce-de-liqueur Louisianienne."

"Sounds attractive," Sandra thought; and brought on in a crystal swan guided with reins of smilax by a candy Cupid on a gleaming lake of Sheffield plate, dappled with pink water-lilies, it looked so. Sandra, evidently, had hit on the chef's pet "creation." For nothing less, that imposing Mardi-Gras float.

Apparently the sweet proved worth the parade; a mere taste of it evoked "Quite wonderful," from Sandra.

"Everything's wonderful," he echoed fervidly.

"The sauce in particular," she specified prosily, quite missing his intent or else mocking the sentiment. And yet the words were vain against her gaze: questioning, wistful, sweetly troubled it went past him to the scene beyond. . . . There was danc-

ing now—between the tables—to a band of strings whose soft melody cozened steps of acquiescent languor; the moon sieving through fleecy clouds powdered the garden with a silver mist and hazed the garish lamps to the softness of fire-flies. . . . A stillness foreign to the company and all the circumstance tokened the enchantment.

“I don’t believe I’ll ever forget this,” whispered Sandra, emerging from the spell.

Tensely he began—“If I could be sure of that——”

Her eyes, down-cast, avoided his.

“You can make sure, if you *will*.”

“Try me!” he pleaded. “Put me to the test.”

“I’m wondering if you could——?”

“Yes, yes!” he prompted. “Anything!”

“It’s only”—her glance still lowered—“the recipe for this dessert.—Think you might get it from the chef so I could take it to China?”

“Oh!” He groaned it—without distracting her interest an iota from the pudding.

“What did the waiter call it?”

Cartell repeated the rigmarole, or as nearly as he could.

“What does all that mean?”

He couldn’t bring himself to tell her. They had left so far behind till now all circumstance of their earlier association. For the moment it had been in truth—for him—‘just as though nothing had ever

happened.' And as if anything, conceivably, might happen.

"Is it some untranslatable idiom?" she persisted, "a figure-of-speech?"

That showed the way! "What day is this?" he asked—"this perfectly incredible day?"

"Why—Tuesday, of course!—But what's the day to do——?"

The band was playing Varney's *Valse d'Oiseau*, with "effects" ranging from peacocks to nightingales. Yet Sandra's memory slept. Then a solitary bird, caged in the wistaria over-head, peeped, chirped and twittered.

"Horrors!" she gasped. "Please don't say that I ordered——"

"H'm, h'm."

"And I meant everything this evening to be quite unusual!"

Which imposed that he omit the usual. And yet he vowed: "I've never known an evening like this—and never shall again."

Habit framed her lips to "Bosh!"—the indicated sedative—but turned instead to the substitute: "I'm afraid you're talking too much, sir"—with a look at her wrist-watch.

"My first real chance," he said, "possibly my last." Whereupon she buttoned her jacket and began to put on her gloves with a care that seemed to call for her undivided attention.

"You're not listening."

“Yes, sir.”

“You know what’s in my mind to say?”

“Let’s pretend I don’t—for the present, at least.”

“Why ‘pretend’—what for?”

“For variety,” she laughed. “Everything will be much more—attractive. . . . Do you mind?”

“What a question!” he scoffed dismissingly, and then hurried to answer it at such protracted length and with such convincing detail that before he’d done she had one troubling glove on, and was starting the other.

“Well, then, I—think—I know—yes, I’m sure I do. Or I wouldn’t have tried so hard this afternoon to keep you from saying it.”

(So that was the game? Played, too, with the skill of an old hand, though scarcely out of blue-ingham. All in a day’s work, they will tell you: part of the training.)

“Wasn’t very nice, was it?” And as though that wasn’t contrition enough: “But I thought, of course, you’d see through it.”

No, he owned, not till this moment. “And now”—he demanded—“what are you going to do about it?”

“I’m going to think about it,” she answered with grave decision.

“You’ll be leaving in a week,” he persisted. “Before you go——?”

She shook her head: “When I return.”

“A year—a dismal, hopeless, wasted year!”

"Yes, sir," she assented, "and yet I'm quite determined."

"You won't change your mind?"

"Perhaps you wouldn't want me to, if you knew—but I mean for the year to make sure."

"Of yourself?"

"Yes!" Her brisk candour was entrancing. "And for you, too."

"Good Lord, girl!" He laughed at the suggestion of uncertainty on his score. "I'm all in."

"You'll have a year to get out, if you choose."

"If I *can*," he corrected. "That's what you mean, isn't it?"

She answered straight:

"Yes, of course. And I expect you to try, at least. Want you to. I'd much rather you didn't succeed"—her frankness shirked nothing now—"but I shouldn't be surprised if you did. A year is ever so far off, in some things—and China even farther."

"Now—honor-bright," he insisted, "as candidly as you just answered of yourself: You haven't any doubt in my case?"

"I—don't—know." Then, laughing: "I suppose I can't have so *very* much doubt or I wouldn't be leaving the case for a year.—Now we really must go——"

He sought to detain her. "Just a moment—please——"

"No! Time you got home, sir." For an instant



habit of authority resumed its sway. "You've talked quite enough for one day. . . . And, besides, Tom, we have still quite a ways to go."

The nightly tempest of fiddles, traps and saxophones had died out when Cartell made his way up to the Tavern an hour later; he had met the last of the dancers, straggling down the mountain-side, some arm-in-arm, some arms-about, against the dangers of the steep descent. On the level they might have been mis-viewed for petting-parties—and banished, henceforth, from the Tavern's soirées. Schwartz held these, in a way, an element in the "after-cure" to which he dignified his hostelry, and he guarded their decorum as might Mrs. Comley-Draycott and her associates of the Hospital directorate.

Cartell found him on the lawn in lively though whispered communion with the stars and his police-dog whom he addressed in his native language. He voiced relief at sight of Cartell:

"Ah, I was getting uneasy. You are the last one out. I could not lock up until. . . ."

"Thank you for waiting and for—everything!"

"The dinner——?"

"Perfect. Service, cuisine, menu—everything wonderful!"

Schwartz made a move toward the door.

"Leave me the key, if you don't mind," Cartell said, "I'll sit here a bit longer."

“But you heard what that nurse said—you shouldn’t be out—the night-air——”

“It’s quite mild.”

“Yes, but it is always a little—imperilling, the nurses think, by such a moon. Still, on the other hand”—giving him the door-key—“it is also, may be, a little . . . palpitating.—If that is the word, yes?”

“Just the word, thank you, Schwartz. Good night!”

CHAPTER XXVIII

DOCTOR HAMPDEN PUTS THE PERSONAL NOTE IN A PROFESSIONAL RECORD

THEY speed the going guest from B. M. H. with a puzzling caution:

“Go easy—and go to work!”

You’ve planned to:—Next month?

“No! You may be dead next month.”

Next week, then?

“Just as uncertain as the other. Today! Now! You’re sure of that.”

The scheme and spirit of the place swear at coddling. ‘The job’s done. Stop thinking about it!’

Dr. Hampden made a point, whenever practicable, of “observing” his convalescents seemingly by mere chance. Easy enough at Sevenoaks Tavern where sojourned, always at this season, several of his hospital cases and many of his regular practice. Today he was, apparently, about to re-enter his car, when he caught sight of Cartell, and crossing the lawn joined him.

"What you doing here?" he asked in tone of surprise.

"You sent me here, Doctor."

"Yes, but that was some time ago."

"I thought best, perhaps, to remain within reach of you—and the hospital."

"O, stop thinking of the hospital—and everything about it!—Of course, if you like this place——"

"Immensely."

"Stay on, then. Agrees with you. See that. You've put on weight. Doing any work?"

"Some."

"Some isn't good enough.—Whoop it up! Keep at it! Don't moon or mope. Get interested in something—anything—thoroughly excited. Can if you try."

"I am now, Doctor," he confessed rather sheepishly—"without half trying."

"Yes, of course! Forgot. Engaged—have it in the record of the case."

"Now, I'm afraid, you'll have to take it out."

"H'm! I see! Interesting! Happens now and then, in our work. Two kinds of women in the world, we find. Some care for sick men, some don't. Either love to look after 'em, or—can't see them at all. Some scheme of nature, evidently. Don't know what her game is, but she generally knows her business."

"'Natural selection?'" Cartell suggested. "Dar-

win's idea? 'Vae victis! Weak must go to the wall.' "

"But seems you're doing some selecting on your own account.—And before you got ill, were you liable to this sort of—flare?"

"This isn't a flare; it's a conflagration."

"Fine! Most encouraging! When did you first notice the smoke? How long ago?" And out came the note-book.

There was no trace of curiosity in his questioning; but he flashed interest and animation.

"I'm not concerned, of course, with a patient's personal affairs, but this has a medical bearing—part of the history of the case—and I want it in the record. Way you've put on weight is something, but this—psychic—come-back is significant; might say corking! Now as to the time—since you came here, of course, to the Inn?"

"No. At the hospital."

"Porch acquaintance, eh? Fellow-patient?"

"Nurse, Doctor Hampden."

"'Nurse?' O, I don't like that—don't like it. Ridiculous!" And he closed the note-book.

"That's a waste—sheer waste—of scarce material. Happens right along, too. Take a girl—promising girl—teach and train her for three years—give her lectures and clinics and cases to practise on—and she's hardly out of blue-gingham before some fool patient comes along and shakes orange-blossoms at her."

It hasn't gone as far as that, Cartell assured him: never will—"not one chance in a hundred," he quoted, for the orange-blossoms; he'd be quite content if she'd accept rosemary—for remembrance, pansies—for thoughts, and occasionally her favorite marshmallows. So one 'fool patient,' at least, knew where to draw the line at his folly—"if that has any bearing on the case."

"Yes, indeed!" And then, as if to himself:

"Mind working clearly—no morbidness—nor delusions. . . . Keep it up!—And drop the tonic.—Don't need it. Stick to the marshmallows and you'll be all right—in a year."

"But why just a year?"

"We don't know at first hand. Have to take the nurses' word for the—phenomenon. In their experience, they say, it lasts one year."

"Frightfully definite, isn't it?"

"That seems to be the period required to complete the metabolism. But we're not going to take any chances. Get away from here. Too near the danger zone."

"Where d'you advise me to go?"

"Anywhere—that's a change."

"Mountains?"

"All right—if not in this latitude."

"How about a sea-voyage?"

"Yes—real *voyage*; not just skirting around this coast.—Ever take the Panama trip?"

"No. That *is* an idea!"

“And from there, maybe, up to Honolulu, if you care to.”

Yes, he was sure he'd like that, but—“Not too far, Doctor?”

“Not for the complete change you need. You'll get it there—climate, scenery, people, ukuleles——”

“Then, if nothing happens, I might perhaps go on to the Philippines?”

“By all means. And when you're that far, you might as well take in Japan.”

“Keep on, Doctor, and you'll have me in China.”

“Why not? Another world for you! Avoid the beaten tracks of travel and you'll forget there's any such thing as hospitals, doctors or nurses.”

Cartell could hardly thank him—nor conceal his delight: “I've always been keen for that Pacific trip—especially so of late; but I was afraid you might——”

“No! Wonder I didn't think of it before. When do you plan to start?”

“Next month, unless you disapprove——”

“No, no. Next week if you like. Sooner the better. I'll have Miss Frewen, my secretary, look up the steamer date for you.”

He gave some final injunctions, which Cartell promised to obey. Though it doesn't seem to matter, he said; the whole business, he'd come to think, was in Fate's hands. “You believe that, don't you, Doctor?”

Yes, he did—within limits. And if you use

ordinary common-sense, Fate will take care of you. But you mustn't pester the Old Lady, and wear out her patience. She means to look out for you to the finish—'till your time comes, as they say; she's fixed the how, when and where. But you mustn't presume too far on that. She can't be tagging at your heels all the time. Has other fish to fry. And if you *will* go running damn-fool chances, taking all sorts of silly, desperate risks just to try her out—see how far you can go with her—you'll bump up against some little microbe some day when she isn't around——

Coming home, that night, from the Circus—Doctor Switcher had warned them not to miss it, "best clown since George Fox"—he reminded Doctor Fenway of that case they had in "73"—man named Cartell.

Yes, Fenway remembered: "Came through, didn't he?"

"Yes, and come-back. Talks of ocean-voyage.—All right?"

"Guess so.—Where to?"

"Says he's going to cross the Pacific."

"Going some, isn't he?"

"Struck me so. Most surprising, I'd say."

"Yes, yes. Of course. Always is.—But I had a lot of faith in that case, somehow."

Hampden curbed his enjoyment to smiles, but not



easily; bit his stogie in two to choke it off, and hurried to ask:

“That long ocean voyage—ten thousand miles, maybe.—What do you think?”

“Can’t hurt—may help.—Married man?”

“No,” Hampden laughed, “but seems to have gotten seriously interested in some one.”

“Good! That’s sure to help.”

“Yes, but—one of the nurses at B. M. H.”

“H’m! Is it settled?”

“No, no. And he says no chance. But you never can tell—at B. M. H.”

“Yes—we are unlucky, that way. Better get him away, quick.”

“I’ve started him,” Hampden chuckled: “advised a change of climate immediately.”

“Fine! We can’t waste nurses on well men. We’re losing two, next week—taken a job in the Orient—Miss Dalkeith and Miss—Miss—Sanders?”

“Not Savile?—Sandra Savile?”

“Yes, that’s the girl. Mrs. Moncrieff’s protégée.—Going to a Children’s Hospital—at Huang Chau.”

“What do you know about that!”

“Somewhere in China—all I know,” Fenway replied, literally.

“Y—e—s”—Hampden mused. “Can you beat it!”

“No sir,” said the great surgeon, recalling him-

self from that Huang Chau Hospital, "you can't beat a good Circus for complete mental diversion."

A little further on old Doctor Switcher caught up with them. . . . 'Yes, this was his third visit . . . that clown—most attractive case—going same way as George Fox—and Grimaldi, too. Strange thing about those fellows' . . .

The rest of the way home these three men of magic to whom science bares her inmost secrets talked, wonderingly, of the trained seals, the bare-back rider, the maroon-striped okapi, the iron-jawed lady, the pie-bald jumper—'mighty rare with that color'!—the Cingalese knife-jugglers. . . .





MAR 15 1923

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021699251

